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THE

First Unitarian Church

OF BUFFALO:

ITS HISTORY AND PROGRESS.

REV. DR. HOSMER'S

Quarter Centennial Discourses:

THE PARISH—THE PULPIT.

AN ACCOUNT OF

THE QUARTER CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION,

On Wednesday Evening, October 16th, 1861.

Buffalo, N. Y. First Unitarian Church.

PRINTED FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION.

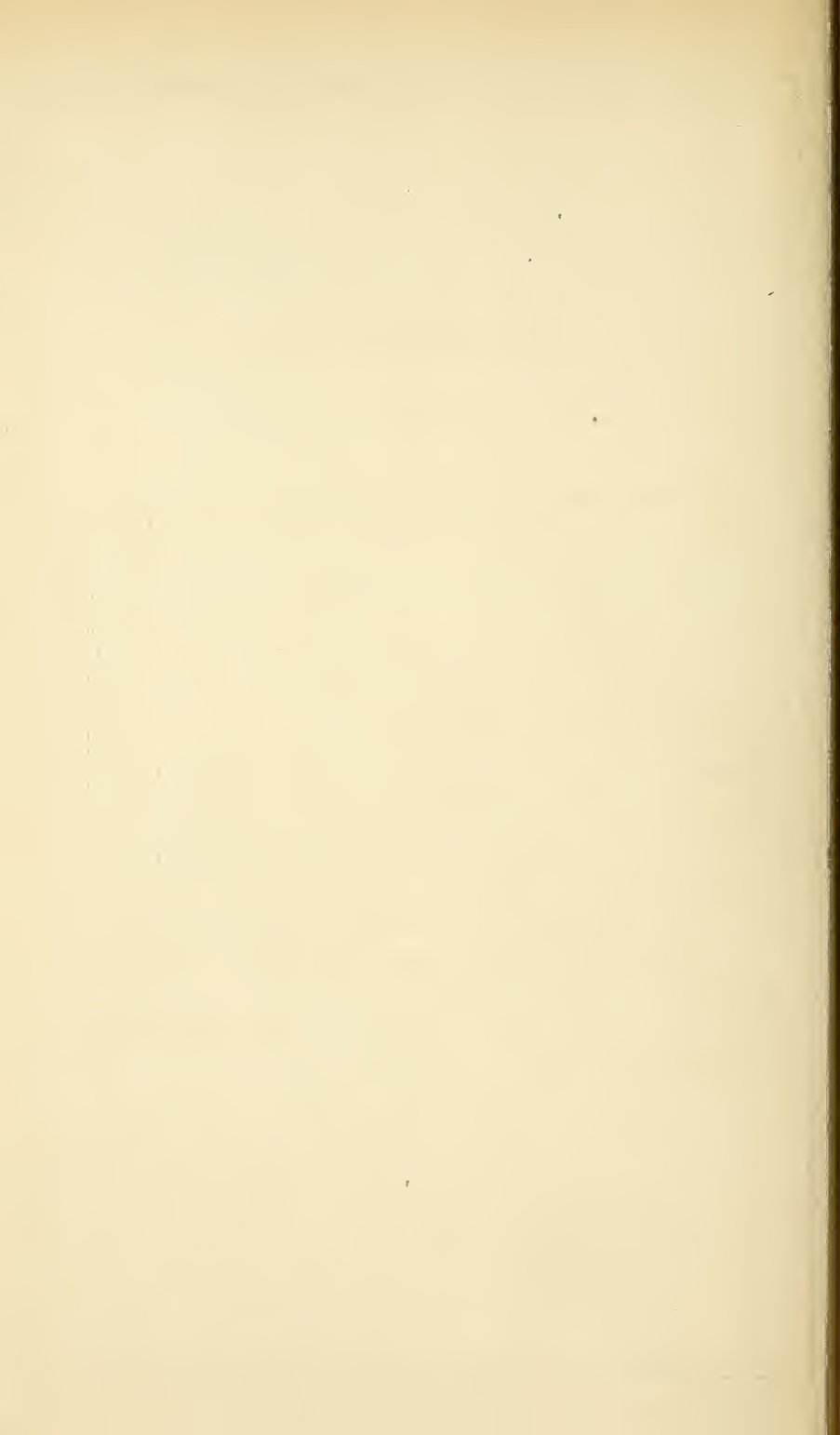
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BUFFALO:

FRANKLIN STEAM PRINTING HOUSE,

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1861



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P R E F A C E .

THE present "Memorial" of the First Unitarian Church is not, as is explained on the title-page, intended for general circulation. The occurrence of the Quarter Centennial Anniversary, and the peculiar and pleasant circumstances connected therewith, suggested to several of the gentlemen connected with our Church, the propriety of making out, not only an account of the Anniversary, but to add thereto as detailed an account of the history of our Church, down to the present time, as these means would permit. The whole matter has been a labor of love, kindly performed by some three or four of our members, and sent forth as such. The authorship of the sermons, the speeches, and the finished Poem at the end, speak for themselves. The balance has been the work of those whose heart is in the matter, and is put forth with no particular claims to literary merit. The necessity of such a work is obvious.

THE COMMITTEE.

Buffalo, December, 1861.

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THE

First Unitarian Church of Buffalo.

ITS HISTORY AND PROGRESS.

HISTORY

OF THE

First Unitarian Church of Buffalo.

ON the 16th day of October, 1836, Rev. GEORGE W. HOSMER was installed pastor of the "First Unitarian Congregational Society of Buffalo." On the 16th day of October, 1861, the congregation met at the Parsonage of the Society, on Niagara street, for the purpose of celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of his settlement. As might be expected, there was a general attendance of the congregation, and the occasion was one long to be remembered by both Pastor and people.

As a mark of affection for the Pastor, and a testimony of appreciation of his long and faithful services, a valuable and elegant service of plate was presented to him, in commemoration of the anniversary. The details and ceremonies of this interesting occasion are given in the proper place in this memorial.

An interesting feature of the proceedings, was a statement by the Senior Deacon, Mr. N. P. SPRAGUE, of the origin and early history of the Society. No person could be more competent than Mr. SPRAGUE, to prepare such a statement. He was one of the founders

of the Society, and from its inception to the present time, has been at all times one of its most consistent and efficient friends and counsellors.

The destruction by fire of the records of the Society, deprived him of the dates and details of the business of the Society, but his intimate connection with its transactions, enabled him to give from memory a very complete and deeply interesting account of its early history and progress, to the settlement of the present pastor. It has been thought, however, that it would be gratifying to the present congregation, to have a still more complete history of the Society, embracing the period covered by Mr. SPRAGUE, and brought down as completely as possible, to the anniversary lately commemorated. In so doing, it will be necessary to recapitulate, to some extent, the facts given by him, for the sake of symmetry and completeness. The details of many of the facts stated will be found in the speech of Mr. SPRAGUE, which is given in its appropriate place.

In the summer of 1831, a correspondence was opened by Mr. SPRAGUE with Rev. JOHN PIERPONT, of Boston, in relation to preaching, and the formation of a Unitarian Society in Buffalo. The result of this correspondence was the engagement of Rev. Mr. SULLIVAN, of Keene, N. H., to preach here three Sundays. Mr. SULLIVAN came in November of that year, and services were held in the old Court House. A fair audience attended these services, and those persons residing in the village, who sympathized in the faith of the speaker, became known to each other.

It was determined to organize a society, and the necessary legal steps were taken. At the final meeting to complete the organization, Messrs. N. P. SPRAGUE, JOHN W. BEALS, IRA A. BLOSSOM, E. D. EFNER, and JAMES MCKAY, were elected Trustees of the "First Unitarian Society of the Village of Buffalo." S. N. CALLENDER was elected Treasurer, and WILLIAM NEWMAN Clerk. The Society was too small to justify immediate efforts to establish regular services, but there was incidental preaching at various times during the year 1832. In the fall of the year an arrangement was made with Rev. WILLIAM STEILL BROWN, an English clergyman who had recently arrived at Boston, to preach for the Society. Mr. BROWN arrived here in October, 1832, and entered upon his ministry. The circumstances under which this was effected, and the vexations and discouragements which attended the first season of regular services, are graphically described by Mr. SPRAGUE.

It soon became apparent that little progress, and no permanent success, would be obtained, until the Society could provide a church building sufficient to accommodate the Society, and of a character to take rank in some degree with the edifices of other denominations. With an energy and confidence which now appears almost reckless for so small a number, in the spring of 1833, it was determined to make the effort.

The lot now occupied by the church was purchased for \$2,000, and a contract made with B. RATHBUN to build the church for \$6,000. Here was a positive debt of \$8,000, created by a society consisting of scarcely a dozen individuals, with a certainty of a large addi-

tional expense in fitting and preparing the building for regular services, as well as to provide for its annual expenses. The result justified the confidence of the Trustees, and shows the power of concentrated effort, when inspired by faith and hope. The corner-stone of the church was laid the 11th of August, and an eloquent and impressive discourse was delivered by Mr. BROWN on the occasion, and in presence of a large audience. The building was completed in November following, and on the twentieth of that month was dedicated with appropriate ceremonies. The sermon was preached by Rev. JOHN PIERPONT, and Mr. BROWN was regularly installed as Pastor.

At the sale of pews the following week, twelve persons only were purchasers; that number comprising all the members of the Society who had made subscriptions for that purpose. From this time services have been regularly held in the Church, and an omission of Sunday services during the whole period has been very rare.

Mr. BROWN remained with us until the spring of 1834, when circumstances made it necessary for him to leave for the South. He retained to the last the profound respect and esteem of his congregation.

The successor of Mr. BROWN was Rev. A. C. PATTERSON, a young man recently graduated at Cambridge, who was ordained August 13th, 1834. The ordination sermon was preached by Rev. Dr. GARNETT, of Boston. Mr. PATTERSON remained with the Society until the spring of 1836, when he resigned.

The Society had in the meantime gradually assumed

stability and system. Many important steps had been taken, which greatly contributed to its unity and prosperity. The Sunday School was organized in 1835, commencing with but eight scholars, and has since been regularly and successfully conducted. The Ladies' Benevolent Association was organized the same year, and has always been a most valuable and efficient auxiliary to the Society. The ordinances of the Church were regularly established, and the Communion was first administered by Mr. PATTERSON. The first Deacons were JOHN W. BEALS and N. P. SPRAGUE. An organ was purchased and placed in the Church, at an expense of \$2,000, which was paid for by private subscription. The remaining debt on the church property was paid in full, by a fortunate arrangement with parties connected with the Society, which is referred to in detail by Mr. SPRAGUE.

Thus far the Society had attained a success unprecedented in the city, with so small a roll of members, and the year 1836 opened with fair prospects. On the resignation of Mr. PATTERSON, a correspondence was entered into with the present Pastor, resulting in a call from the Society, which was accepted, and he was installed on the 16th day of October, 1836. The sermon was preached by Rev. Dr. DEWEY, of New York.

When Mr. HOSMER entered upon his pastorate, the Society was in a condition of apparent prosperity. The building debt was all paid, the Church well fitted up with all the requirements of our order of services. The ordinances of the Church, the Sunday School, and the Ladies' Association, were established, and every thing

appeared accomplished which was necessary for the stability of the Society. The next year brought with it great and unfortunate reverses. The revulsion of 1837, following the great inflation of 1835-6, came upon the city, involving nearly the whole business population in common ruin. Business was at a stand, and nearly annihilated, and large expectations melted away and vanished like a dream. The members of our Society were involved more or less in the general wreck. Several valuable members left the city, and of those who remained, few were able to contribute freely to the current expenses.

The depression of business continued until 1841-2, when prosperity again began to dawn upon the city. During this period the Society had gradually fallen behind in its expenses, and in 1842 the arrearages amounted to nearly \$2,000, the Society in debt to the Pastor, and he in debt to those who would give him credit. It was with much difficulty that sufficient income could be realized to meet necessary expenses, and the prospect of selling pew stock to pay the debt was very remote. It really seemed for a short time, that the Society must dissolve. In this crisis, a general meeting of the Society was called at the vestry room, which was well attended. The condition of affairs was discouraging, but it required but a brief interchange of views and feelings, to develop a determination to make an effort to provide for arrearages, and go on as usual. A subscription was started at once, and to the surprise of many, and the satisfaction of all, was completely successful. The whole of the arrearages of the

Society were provided for, and from that period none has been suffered to accumulate.

For the purpose of insuring ample provision for current expenses, nearly all the pew-holders voluntarily and largely increased their yearly rate of taxation, and all increased, in such form as they were able, their annual contributions.

The salary of the Pastor was fixed at the time of his settlement, at \$1,500 per annum; but actuated by the same spirit which inspired the congregation, he proposed to reduce it to \$1,200, a liberality which the Society did not feel at liberty to accept, but necessity constrained them to do so. Again, amidst the general gloom and depression, the Pastor proposed to reduce his salary from \$1,200 to \$1,000, and again the Society refused, but were compelled to let it be done. But as soon as business revived, the Society moved to increase the salary. The Pastor in each instance moved first in diminishing; the Society has moved first in increasing, from \$1,000 to \$1,200, then from \$1,200 to \$1,500, and lastly from \$1,500 to \$1,800; and each increase has been without hint or knowledge of the Pastor. We are happy to think of these facts, honorable to our minister, and not dishonorable to us.

In all the vicissitudes of temporal affairs, during his pastorate, and in every effort of the Society to strengthen and consolidate itself, our minister has tendered his full proportion, and made personal efforts, without which it could scarcely have achieved such decided success.

Important improvements, from time to time, have been

made in the Church, the expense of which has been defrayed by private subscription.

In 1842 it became evident that an alteration in the back part of our Church was not only desirable, but almost necessary. The Church was originally built with an alcove behind the pulpit, and the builder, to accomplish this, had sacrificed valuable room at this end, which was only useful on one side as a stair-case to the vestry below, and on the other side as a closet or lumber-room. By removing this false back or partition, about four or five feet additional room on the whole width of the floor was obtained; and by judiciously removing back the pulpit and railing in front, some eight or ten pews were added to the capacity of the Church. At this time the gallery, which projected some ten or twelve feet over the pews at that end of the Church, was removed back about five feet. The Church was re-painted, new stucco inscriptions were placed on the ceiling, scriptural tablets were painted on each side of the pulpit, and the whole building generally improved. This was the first important alteration made since the building of the Church, and the whole expense was paid by voluntary subscription.

In 1845 an addition to the Church lot was purchased on Eagle street, and the Church was lengthened to the extent of the lot. By this enlargement several new tiers of pews were added, most of which were immediately occupied, and a sufficient number were sold to defray the expense of the enlargement. The building was at the same time painted and refitted throughout, the gallery was again removed back some four feet, and every thing put in excellent order. All this large

expenditure was provided for by voluntary subscription, either for pew stock or as a free gift.

About four years after this, a further enlargement was made in the Church, by removing the gallery back to its present position, taking out the unsightly stoves from their position, introducing furnaces, raising up the floor of the front part of the Church, and in the place formerly occupied by the old stoves were introduced family or square pews, of which four were then made, and are now regarded as among the most eligible in the Church. Before this alteration was made, it was almost impossible to sell or rent the pews under the gallery and near the stove; they were regarded as "below the salt," and no one liked to occupy them. After this alteration was made, the vacant pews next the square ones were the first to be rented, and now there seems hardly a difference as to preference for any particular section of our neat and commodious Church. This alteration is justly considered to have been one of the most important made in the Church, as it brought into use even more additional pews than were furnished by the extension of the Church in 1845. At this time the Church was entirely re-painted and newly carpetted, and gas was introduced. The entire expense of the whole was again borne by the liberal contributions of our members.

These improvements having been completed, the efforts of the Society were turned in another direction, and to a subject which had frequently been under discussion. This was the purchase of a Parsonage. The detail of this whole subject was finally assumed

by the Ladies' Association, who, with the steady perseverance which has always marked their proceedings, finally accomplished this important result. The property now occupied by the Pastor, was purchased and fitted up under their direction; and under their continued care has been fully paid for. The purchase has proved entirely satisfactory to the Society, and the situation and arrangement eminently agreeable to the Pastor and his family.

Every requirement now appeared to be provided for, and the Society rested from its labors. The effect of this was in some respects unfavorable. The Society, like the rich man in the parable, began to take its ease, and in the absence of any pressing demand upon its liberality or personal effort, became indifferent and neglectful. Then came calamity, like a sudden storm on a fair day. Our church edifice was nearly destroyed by fire. It was a sad season. The following Sunday we worshipped in Kremlin Hall, and our Pastor preached from the text, "By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion."

The catastrophe occurred on the morning of the 22d of April, 1859, and although but a small portion of the interior of the building was actually burned, the heat, smoke and water combined, produced almost complete destruction. For a short time the Society seemed paralyzed by this unlooked-for calamity, but it required but little reflection and consultation to rouse the old spirit of united effort, and the building was speedily in progress of renovation. In a few months it was restored, at the cost of about \$5,000, with all

the various improvements, as it now appears, and is one of the most chaste, convenient, and beautiful church edifices in the city.

The insurance upon the property defrayed a portion of the expense, and the never-failing resource of private subscription provided for the remainder. The repairs of the Church, with the refitting and furnishing, were completed and the Church re-occupied in October of the same year.

It is with pleasure that the Society remember the christian spirit manifested by the Niagara Street Methodist Church, on that occasion. With a promptness and liberality which is its own eulogy, the use of their Church was tendered to this Society, every Sunday afternoon during the progress of the repairs of our Church. The offer was gratefully accepted, and regular services were held in their Church until the completion of our own.

For the present the wants of the Society appear to be well provided for. The last improvements referred to are so recent, that they may fairly be credited to the present congregation, all of whom have contributed to this result.

In this brief sketch of the history and progress of the Society, it cannot be expected that every event can be enumerated. The loss of the records by fire some years ago, makes it necessary to rely upon memory for many of the facts and details. There have been many circumstances and matters of local interest, which should be remembered on an occasion like this. There are few objects of public interest,

connected with the intellectual and moral improvement, and the benevolent and educational institutions of the city, in which the Society, or its individual members, have not largely participated. No call upon the Society, of this character, was ever made, that was not promptly and liberally responded to. In several instances, important benevolent efforts, in which the whole community have been interested, were initiated and supported within ourselves. One in particular, deserves special mention.

In December, 1835, Mr. ALANSON PALMER transferred to the Trustees of this Society, the annual interest of a mortgage of \$12,000, to be devoted, under their supervision, to purposes of education. With this fund the Trustees organized a free school in the basement of the Church, which was called the "Palmer School," and was placed in charge of Mr. JAMES MCCREDIE. The school was free to all children of the poor in the city; and vagrants were gathered from the streets. It was successfully carried on for nearly five years, and in its day was a valuable institution, fulfilling all its purposes, and accomplishing great good, at a time when there was no public provision for free education.

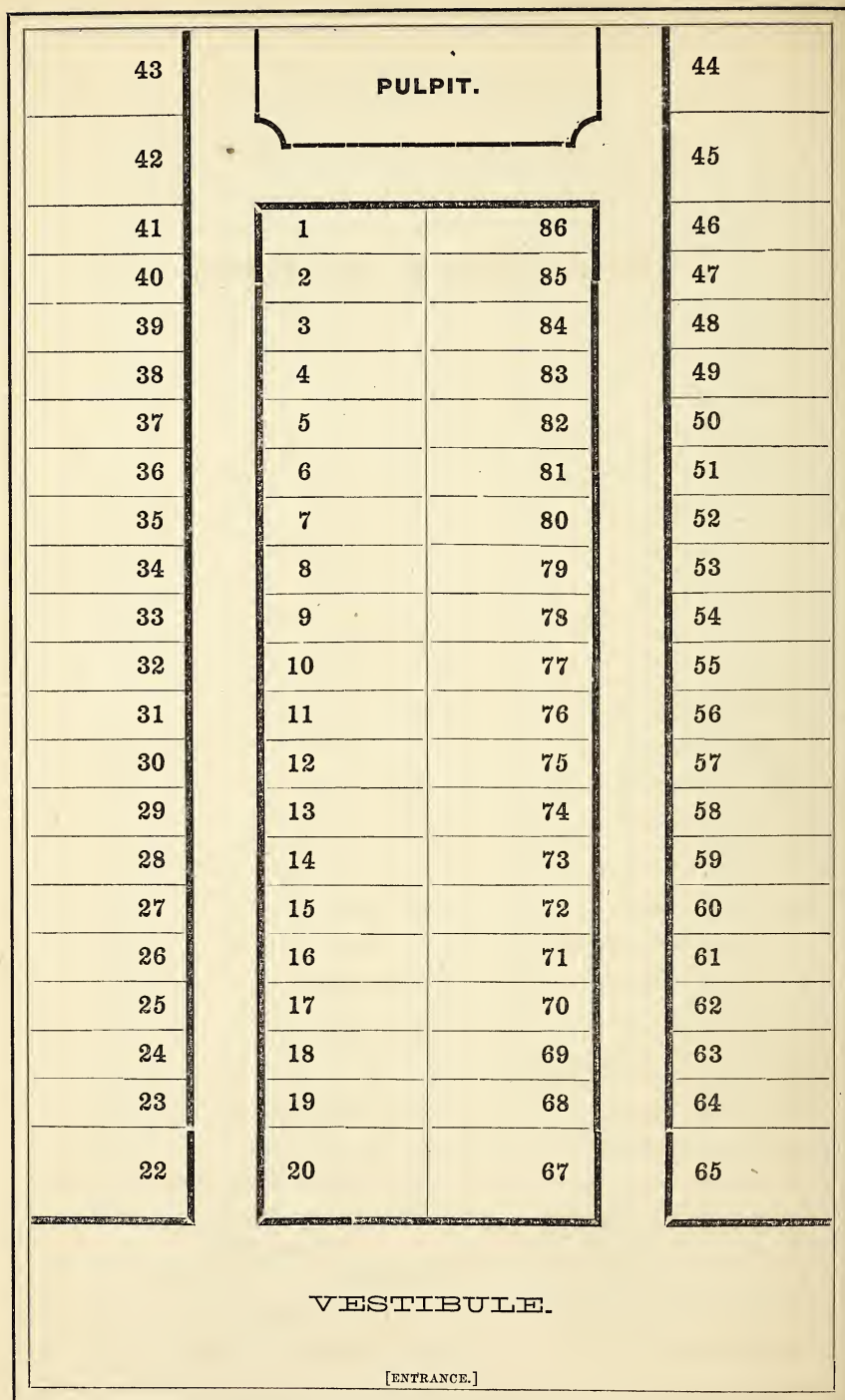
Other benevolent individuals established similar schools about the same time, but all were finally superseded by the public free school system, which has since provided so fully and munificently for the education of all children within its borders.

In 1855 the Western Conference held its annual session in this city. Delegates from all parts of the Western States, and of both sexes, were present in large numbers, comprising an audience which, for respect-

ability and high cultivation, united with earnest christian faith, has rarely been equalled. The Conference was in session several days, and a large number of our most eminent clergy and laity, from Eastern as well as Western States, participated in its proceedings. It was truly an interesting and instructive occasion, and one which long will dwell in the hearts of the numerous audience in constant attendance.

The collation prepared by the ladies of the Society was the crowning grace. A large number of ladies and gentlemen sat down at tables provided in American Hall, and the eloquent speeches of distinguished clergymen and others, and the general interchange of sentiment and good feeling, combined to make it one of the most delightful of festive occasions.

The Society is now in a condition of comparative ease and prosperity, which may well be looked upon with pride and satisfaction by every member. The Church and Parsonage are paid for, and fitted up with all the required surroundings and improvements. Its members are bound together by ties of mutual respect and confidence, and its proceedings for a period of thirty years, since its first organization, have been marked by a spirit of harmony and christian charity in every important relation. It now has the largest regular membership and attendance it ever had, and the new members and younger generation, who now compose so large a proportion of the Society, bid fair to sustain in every respect the position and character which it has always held.



GROUND PLAN OF THE CHURCH.

List of Names of New-Holders.

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1.—Rev. G. W. Hosmer, | 20.—H. G. White, |
| 2.—A. G. C. Cochrane, | 22.—C. F. S. Thomas, |
| A. T. Kingman, | 23.—William W. Newman, |
| 3.—P. S. Marsh, | Thomas J. Sizer, |
| G. P. Langdon, | 24.—Joseph Saltar, |
| 4.—C. A. Milliken, | 25.—John Warren, |
| J. W. Williams, | 26.—George Avery, |
| 5.—O. W. Ranney, | D. Russell, |
| 6.—P. Dorsheimer, | 27.—E. A. Spencer, |
| H. Clifton, | Charles H. Rathbun, |
| 7.—Egbert Harvey, | 28.—J. R. Lothrop, |
| J. Pettibone, | 29.—A. B. Platt, |
| 8.—E. Rose, | 30.—E. B. Vedder, |
| J. S. Oakley, | A. Walker, |
| 9.—J. E. Follett, | Mary L. Hoyt, |
| Charles Coleman, | Sarah J. Hoyt, |
| 10.—Lucius Pratt, | 31.—J. D. Dudley, |
| Miss Rumney, | W. H. Stuart, |
| Misses Beals, | 32.—W. B. Ayres, |
| 11.—Samuel N. Callender, | L. B. Trowbridge, |
| 12.—Darius Clark, | 33.—Hiram Barton, |
| 13.—H. N. Lymburner, | 34.—L. L. Frink, |
| 14.—G. O. Vail, | 35.—Thomas Stephenson, |
| 15.—William C. Davison, | 36.—Warren Bryant, |
| 16.—L. H. Flersheim, | H. Wadsworth, |
| 17.— | 37.—Mrs. L. H. Rumrill, |
| 18.—John Weeks, | F. M. Snow, |
| 19.—Charles E. Bacon, | 38.—Augustus F. Tripp, |

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- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 39.—Walter S. Abbott, | 60.—Mrs. Mary Hall, |
| 40.—G. Bailey, | 61.—William C. Munroe, |
| 41.—George D. Teller, | 62.—E. H. Letchworth, |
| 42.—F. C. Brunck, | William P. Letchworth, |
| J. E. Francis, | Josiah Letchworth, |
| F. Keppel, | 63.—George Thomas, |
| 43.—Mrs. J. W. Williams, | 64.—J. T. Avery, |
| F. Williams, | 65.—George A. Prince, |
| R. L. Williams, | 67.—E. P. Dorr, |
| 44.—William Lovering, | 68.—William F. Tucker, |
| George Truscott, | J. Tucker, |
| 45.—C. H. Coleman, | 69.—Richard Williams, |
| J. H. Coleman, | 70.—J. C. Forbush, |
| William Coleman, | John Felton, |
| 46.—Mrs. William Treat, | 71.—Mrs. E. Baldwin, |
| Miss Wall, | 72.—Mrs. Wibert, |
| 47.—Volney Randall, | 73.—Oliver G. Steele, |
| 48.—John Michael, | 74.—B. Spencer, |
| 49.—James Hollister. | 75.—F. C. Candee, |
| 50.—E. Hadley, | A. P. Millar, |
| 51.—Charles Howland, | 76.—Samuel W. Hawes, |
| John Howcutt, | 77.—Noah P. Sprague, |
| 52.—C. D. Delaney, | E. C. Sprague, |
| F. Gardner, | 78.—George W. Houghton, |
| Miss Gardner, | 79.—Millard Fillmore, |
| 53.—Gustavus Bassett, | M. P. Fillmore, |
| 54.—Leonard Wilson, | 80.—William Fiske, |
| P. Hoffman, | William T. Wardwell, |
| 55.—Z. Bonney, | 81.—Nathan K. Hall, |
| John Pierce, | George Gorham, |
| 56.—B. A. Root, | 82.—E. H. Howard, |
| W. H. Woodward, | H. F. Cogswell, |
| 57.—Thomas Bullymore, | 83.—George B. Gates, |
| 58.—E. Thayer, | 84.—Mrs. John Langdon, |
| J. S. Noyes, | 85.—E. H. Dutton, |
| 59.—Thomas Dunbar, | 86.—Mrs. Heywood. |
| 60.—L. D. Wilbur, | Mrs. Kasson. |

Documents and Memoranda.

VERY fortunately for our Society, it was recently ascertained that although the original Church Records, which had been carefully kept for a number of years by the Secretary of the Society, THOMAS J. SIZER, Esq., had been burned, still that Mr. SAMUEL N. CALLENDER, whose name is connected with almost every important movement of the Church, had preserved much important memoranda, and many interesting documents. We have selected the following as worthy of preservation:

Extracts from Church Memoranda.

1832. *Nov.* 20.—Agreed with Blossom & Co. to fit up a room in Ellicott Square, at the expense of the "First Unitarian Society," and said Society to occupy the same for three years gratis.

Dec. 15.—Agreed with William Ross to serve as Sexton to Church in Ellicott Square, at \$4.00 per month.

1833. *June* 1.—Agreed with Davis (black man) to take charge of room through the summer season, at \$2.00 per month.

1834. *Jan.* 11.—This day rented the centre room in the basement of the Church, until the 1st day of May next, at the rate of \$52.00 per annum, to Miss Davis, for a school.

Jan. 15.—John Thompson commenced his services as Sexton of the Church, at \$1.00 per sabbath.

Insured \$4,000 on the Church—policy expires 26th November, 1834—at the Buffalo Fire and Marine Insurance Company. Premium paid by N. P. Sprague.

May 1.—This day rented the centre room under the Church to Misses

Whitney and Thompson, for a school room, at \$1.50 per week, to be paid quarterly.

Rented the east room to Miss Davis, for the same use as above, at \$1.00 per week,—pay quarterly.

Subscription list for fitting up Hall in Ellicott Square.

Ira A. Blossom,	\$20	W. Newman,	\$10
J. W. Beals,	20	O. G. Steele,	10
J. B. Macy,	20	S. N. Callender,	10
E. D. Efner,	20	L. F. Allen,	10
N. P. Sprague,	20	D. Burton,	5
J. McKay,	10		

Subscriptions for Building Unitarian Church.

Whereas, The "First Unitarian Society of the Village of Buffalo," by their Trustees, Ira A. Blossom, James McKay, Elijah D. Efner, John W. Beals, and Noah P. Sprague, contemplate purchasing a lot of land lying on the corner of Eagle and Franklin streets, in the City of Buffalo, and being in the form of a parallelogram, fifty feet on Franklin street, and seventy-five feet on Eagle street, aforesaid; and also contemplate making a contract with Benjamin Rathbun to build a Church thereon, as a place of public worship for said Society, said lot and church to cost eight thousand dollars, or thereabouts: Now, therefore, in consideration thereof, and in case the aforesaid purchase and contract be made, we, the subscribers, hereby agree to pay to said Trustees, or their order, the several sums by us hereinafter subscribed and set opposite our several names, in payment of the like amount of pew stock, to be deeded to us severally by said Trustees, when said Church shall be completed. It is understood, that immediately after the completion of said Church, the said Trustees will affix a valuation to each of the pews in said Church, and that an auction will be held for the choice of said pews.

Buffalo, 26th June, 1833.

I. A. Blossom,	\$400	George A. H. Patterson,	\$100
J. W. Beals,	400	Nathaniel Vosburgh,	50
S. H. Macy,	400	Lyman Rathbun,	50
E. D. Efner,	300	W. Newman,	50
Noah P. Sprague,	200	S. Jordan,	50
Hickcox & McKay,	100	S. Mathews,	50
O. G. Steele,	150	Henry Lovejoy,	50
S. N. Callender,	100	J. Saltar,	25
A. Palmer,	200	Slade & McKay,	100
Fillmore & Hall,	100	Henry H. Sizer,	20
John Prince,	100	E. J. Roberts,	25
Smith & McKay,	100		

We, the subscribers, hereby agree to pay on demand to the Trustees of the "First Unitarian Society," in the City of Buffalo, the several sums by us hereinafter subscribed and set opposite our names, to be expended by said Trustees toward building a Church for said Society.

J. Sidway,	\$50	R. Moorehead,	\$ 5
Barker & Hudson,	50	Albert H. Tracy,	25
P. B. Porter, Jr.	25	D. Chamberlin,	10
George McKnight & Co.	20	William T. Pease,	25
S. S. Case,	10	Edward Norton,	25
David M. Day,	10	Bryant Burwell,	50
N. Darrow,	5	Jeremiah Staats,	30
C. Athearn,	10		

Original Subscription for Organ.

We, the undersigned, will pay the sums affixed to our names, for a first rate Organ, made in New York or Boston, to be placed in the "First Unitarian Church of Buffalo," as soon as it can be procured: said Organ to cost not less than \$1,200.

Noah P. Sprague,	\$400	E. Crane,	\$15
John B. Macy,	100	L. Chappotin,	25
J. McKay,	100	Geo. W. Jonson,	10
I. A. Blossom,	100	William Moffat,	10
Alanson Palmer,	100	E. H. Howard,	10
E. D. Efner,	100	J. Saltar,	10
O. G. Steele,	50	Seth C. Hawley,	10
J. Prince,	25	C. C. Bristol,	5
D. Chamberlin,	25	A. W. Cutter,	5
W. Bryant,	25	D. Francis,	5
A. Colson,	25	L. P. Hubbard,	5
Fillmore & Hall,	25	S. N. Callender,	25
Henry K. Smith,	25	L. A. Phelps,	10

The Music of our Church.

INASMUCH as there are some very interesting reminiscences connected with the history of the music of our Church, it has been deemed appropriate that a separate chapter should be given to it.

In the early stage of our existence as an organized society, Mr. NOAH P. SPRAGUE (who has always been distinguished as among the most efficient of our supporters) was leader of the Choir; indeed, he took almost the entire charge of the singing, from the organization of our Church down to about the time of the installation of Rev. Dr. HOSMER. Of our early choir the details are necessarily meagre. We learn, however, that Mr. SAMUEL N. CALLENDER was one of Mr. SPRAGUE's efficient aids; and the late Mrs. JAMES MCKAY (then Mrs. SMITH) was our first regular organist, and was very active and serviceable in our choir for several years. Miss JULIA FORWARD (afterwards Mrs. WILLIAMS) at a later period also sang as Soprano.

About the time of Rev. Dr. HOSMER's installation, Mr. BARTON was engaged as Organist, and filled the post for about two years. In 1837 our Choir was first

regularly organized, by the election of GEORGE W. HOUGHTON, Esq., as its President, C. F. S. THOMAS, Vice President, and THOMAS B. CHASE, as Secretary. The Choir then consisted of the following members:

Sopranos.—MRS. SUSAN F. REED, Miss HELEN WARREN, (afterwards MRS. STIMPSON.)

Contraltos.—Miss CYTHERIA WARREN, (MRS. THOMAS B. CHASE,) and Miss SARAH EASTMAN, (MRS. CHARLES COLEMAN.)

Tenors.—GEO. W. HOUGHTON, C. F. S. THOMAS, and WM. FISKE.

Bassos.—GEORGE WHITING, THOMAS B. CHASE, GEORGE BRYANT, GEORGE A. PRINCE, and AUGUSTUS COLSON.

Organist.—THOMAS BARRON.

The Choir continued under this organization, with some unimportant changes, for about three years, when, on the departure of Mrs. REED, the principal Soprano, a lethargy came on,—not unusual in associations of this kind,—and its reputation for excellent church music was certainly on the wane.

Mr. THOMAS STEPHENSON very generously took the post of Organist, and gratuitously filled that important position for nearly five years. Mr. ALBERT POPPENBERG played our Organ for some two years. Mr. FRED. MILLER occupied the position for about the same period. E. C. SPRAGUE, Esq., has occupied a prominent position in our Choir, and at times has been very efficient, both as leader, singer, and Organist, all of which services have, of course, been gratuitous. Mr. C. F. S. THOMAS, whose services in the Choir were commenced shortly after Mr. HOSMER's installation, and have been continued with but little interruption ever since, has probably rendered longer, and consequently more efficient, services

in this department than any other individual connected with our Church; as Conductor, singer, and Committee on Music, his labors have extended over a period of near twenty-five years, and the whole of these services have been entirely gratuitous on his part. About a year since, when Mr. THOMAS proposed to retire from his responsible position, a number of the gentlemen of our Church presented to his wife a handsome testimonial, in the shape of an elegant tea service. Mr. THOMAS, however, has yielded to the force of circumstances, and still furnishes his valuable assistance, gratuitously, to our Church.

To follow the varied history of our Church Music, would occupy perhaps more space than the subject demands, and we have to content ourselves with giving the list of the ladies and gentlemen who have at various times been temporarily or permanently connected with our Choir. These are arranged about in the order of years as can be recollected.

The Organ of our Church is considered by all performers as a remarkably fine-toned one, built by Hook, of Boston, Mass. It is a remarkable coincidence in the history of this instrument, that when it was badly injured at the fire which occurred in the early part of 1859, the same workman who was employed by the manufacturer twenty-three years previous, came on from Boston to Buffalo, and perfected the repairs on his former work.

It may not be inappropriate here to state that our Church Music, at all times respectable, has often been justly ranked as the best of any in Buffalo.

NAMES OF PERSONS

Who have assisted in our Church Music during the past 25 Years.

CONDUCTORS.

Noah P. Sprague,
George W. Houghton,

E. C. Sprague,
C. F. S. Thomas.

ORGANISTS.

B. Barton,
T. Barron,
Thomas Stephenson,
Martin Hobson,
C. G. Degenhard,
Mrs. W. H. Cutler,
E. C. Sprague,

A. Poppenberg,
Fred. Miller,
Charles W. Palmer,
Robert Denton,
Charles A. Clark,
Miss G. Houghton.

SOPRANOS.

Mrs. N. P. Sprague,
Mrs. Smith,
Mrs. Julia Williams,
Mrs. Barton,
Mrs. Susan F. Reed,
Miss Helen Warren, (Stimpson,)
Miss M. C. Newkirk, (Rexford,)
Mrs. Lemon,

Miss E. Cheney, (Perkins,)
Miss Hattie A. Brown, (Miller,)
Mrs. George F. Foote,
Mrs. Helen Ford,
Miss Olver,
Mrs. L. A. Chaffin,
Miss S. H. Nott,

CONTRALTOS.

Miss Cytheria Warren, (Chase,)
Mrs. Charles Coleman,
Miss L. M. Mathews, (Reese,)
Miss Ashley,
Mrs. E. A. Cross,

Miss Rathbun,
Mrs. W. H. Cutler,
Mrs. Julia Cleveland,
Mrs. Jennie Smith,
Miss Averill.

TENORS.

George W. Houghton,
William Fiske,
Lambert S. Reynolds,
E. B. Pewtress,

P. G. Parker,
— Lord,
A. S. Raze,
Charles A. Clark.

BASSOS.

George Whiting,
J. B. Fullerton,
Thomas B. Chase,
George Bryant,
George A. Prince,
J. S. Chadwick,

Walter S. Abbott,
George H. Whitcomb,
H. N. Martin,
Dr. Whittaker,
C. F. S. Thomas,
H. B. Josselyn.

Quarter Centennial Discourses.

THE PARISH.

Quarter Centennial Discourses.

THE PARISH.

"I WILL REMEMBER THE YEARS."—*Psalms*, 77 : 10.

TWENTY-FIVE years of pastoral and pulpit service are our subject. A serious work I have found it to revolve these memories. They are not so large, and full, and cheering, as they might be. The ideals and hopes that have gone before these years in my heart, and so I presume in yours, have by far outrun the facts.

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But I have no lamentations to utter about failures in our work of life. I will take courage in the thought that no sincere word, or earnest deed, or true life, was ever fruitless. What living soul ever did feel satisfied with what it had done? And is it not true that souls that are most alive, are most likely to mourn over the disparity, the great gulf, between what they had hoped, and what they have done!

First, let me carry you to that quiet agricultural town on the banks of the beautiful Connecticut River, where I began my ministry, and where I thought to have spent my days. The scenes of those six years rise before me with great distinctness; my first visit, when

the pulpit and pastoral walks were all new and strange to me; my anxieties, my fears, my hopes; then the invitation to be settled, and there to do my life-work; the deliberation, the seeking counsel, the acceptance of the call,—it all comes up to me as though it were yesterday. My ordination day, thirty-one years ago, is imprinted on my soul. How many friends that stood around me then, have gone from the earth! The leading members of that parish, nearly all of them, have been gathered to their fathers. The warm Right Hand, given me that day as a symbol of christian Fellowship, by a dear friend and class-mate, is mouldering in the dust among the graves of my ancestors, in my native town, where he filled a short ministry with fidelity and love. The Charge was given me by one, who had seen more than eighty years, the senior minister of my native town. Four generations of my family had shared in the influences of his ministry. He looked upon me as one of his children, and I loved and revered him. The patriarch rests with the generations of his people. He who made the Prayer of Consecration has gone home; a venerable loving father, leaving us the best inheritance, inspiring memories of a good life, and of a blessed old age. The preacher has lately retired from the Presidency of Harvard College, our oracle of wisdom, and our tower of strength.

Then the departure of my brethren and fathers, my sense of loneliness, the weight of the burthen I had assumed, the first sabbath's services after the ordination, the first funeral, the first marriage, the first celebration of the Lord's Supper, the first parish difficulties, the

first assurances that I was doing any good,—all these interesting experiences came to me there; and you need not be told why I love to lead you back to them. In that first settlement I thought I had made my home for life. In the history of that town for nearly one hundred and fifty years, no minister had left that parish to go and labor elsewhere. My four predecessors all now lie buried in the rural cemetery. I had seen the benefits of a long settlement; in my youth we had not thought the hills any more a part of our town, than our own minister. And so it seems to me now, as I look back;—that old minister's long life is a part of the moral significance of that town.

Pastors and people should strive to make the ministry permanent. I know novelty is something, but long settlements are best for both; words need a tried and approved man behind them to make them effective. A half century of consistent christian life, in the midst of a people, is better than sermons; and it makes sermons good, though no genius illumines them.

Your invitation, not sought by me, and twice refused, finally drew me from a home that had become dear. It is sad to recall the breaking up of those early ties and associations. We had good friends who could not believe it right; but with many regrets we turned away from the pleasant valley, leaving in it the precious dust of our first-born son, as a pledge that we would not forget our first home.

A quarter of a century gives room for great changes. The acting generation has nearly all changed since I came here. Our city, by increase of population and enlarge-

ment of territory, has increased more than four-fold. The whole aspect of things is wondrously changed. If the town of eighteen hundred and thirty-six were brought back to us to-day, we should hardly recognize it. Those muddy streets and poor wooden structures would make a striking contrast to our paved avenues, skirted with shade trees, and occupied by large durable buildings.

It is especially encouraging to call some things to mind, connected with the intellectual and moral life of our people, and compare past with present. The common schools of the city I have regarded as one of the fields of my pastoral labor, and there is no work that I have done which has yielded larger results than my interest for the schools, and frequent visits and addresses to the children, many of whom are already in the midst of our busy life. Again and again I have had opportunity to touch the forming spirit of childhood and youth, where sectarian fences were not thought of; and sometimes pleasant echoes of the influence have come to encourage further endeavor. For years I made it a part of my duty to visit all the city schools, and know the teachers, but the years bring multiplied duties at home and abroad, and my visits have grown less frequent.

Soon after my arrival here I inquired after the common schools. Indeed there were none; but there were three or four that were partly free. Col. Blossom could not tell me where they were, but encouraged my looking for them. I found one of these schools in the alley, between Franklin and Delaware streets, about midway between Mohawk and Huron streets. The

building was as humble and contracted as its place; but it was filled with children, and there a good old man labored year after year, as faithfully as any teacher ever did. Mr. BEAN—his name should be remembered,—perished many years ago, in a fire on the corner of Main and Eagle streets. Another public school was in a small one-story brick building on Goodell street. Another was in a dark damp basement room on Washington street. There might have been one or two others, schools with a single room, with one or two teachers, and a hundred or more children, packed so closely as to ruin health, and make good order impossible. Such were the schools here, when a man was thought poor if he could not be called worth a hundred thousand dollars. It was not until the most of these visions of wealth vanished away, that earnest attention was given to the education of the whole people, by the property of the whole community. Our society led in the establishment of common schools. We obtained school documents from all quarters, where good experiments had been made. The City Council were interested; Judge HALL labored wisely to mature a plan; JAMES MCKAY helped in the work with eloquent speech; and OLIVER G. STEELE, with a singular union of enthusiasm and practical efficiency, devoted years of time in organizing our present system, and giving it successful progress. And now, in comparison with the little one-story school houses, three or four of them, and good Father BEAN at the head of our educational system, look at our thirty-four school houses, most of them large, and several of them noble build-

ings, and giving ample accommodation to eight thousand scholars, instructed by one hundred and eighty-eight teachers, entirely at public expense,—common schools, as common as this common air we breathe.

I look at another class of enlightening agencies,—popular lectures, and libraries for the people. Our Young Men's Association has been the benefactor here. It began its beneficence twenty-five years ago. Its first course of lectures, indeed its lectures for several years, were given in a desolate, barn-like, garret-room on Main street, below Seneca. We can remember looking up to those naked rafters. Then came the removal to what we all thought the very fine and commodious rooms on South Division street. In those early days the library was small: but it was magnified by the intelligence of our old friend, Dr. RAYMOND, the librarian, who, in view of opposition and evil speech against us, said, "it was so fortunate that our little church had a stone face." Our citizens freely gave their services as lecturers, and small rooms were large enough for our audiences. And now St. James Hall is not too large to hold the multitudes who throng to hear the most gifted men in the country. The Young Men's Library is greatly increased; and this, with the Grosvenor Library, that is soon to be opened, will furnish our city with the aliment of spiritual growth. As a religious society we claim nothing in the Young Men's Association. It is truly an independent body. Sectarianism has not marred its action. We only claim, that we have done what we could to sustain the Association, and especially when it has been assailed for its

liberal administration, and to increase its usefulness. Many of our men have been among its more active members, and four of its Presidents were of our society; and in its day of small things, some of us, who had no silver nor gold to give, gave lectures. The Association has earned an honest claim for money enough from our citizens, to erect for itself a suitable building.

The Orphan Asylum was commenced twenty-five years ago. Several of our members were among its first friends and projectors. When I came here, the question was raised, whether we should work by ourselves, in our care for the needy and wretched, and begin our own institutions of charity; or work with other denominations; and we agreed that it was best to avoid sectarian divisions in charitable action, as far as possible; and this has been our policy always.

There is one lady, whose name, and fine face, noble manners, and generous soul, come up to me in connexion with the Orphan Asylum. She was one of its founders, and had the purpose to make it a large endowment; but though she failed in this, she was always its fast friend; and she was our friend, loved and honored by us all; and her memory is one of the priceless treasures in our hearts. So sympathetic and so strong, so wise and so gentle, she was a ruler among us without making us think of it, or seeming to think of it herself. By her loving will, she drew us in the way of her wisdom.

These twenty-five years have brought great changes to the inner life of our people. Eighteen hundred and thirty-six was the year of extravagant expectation.

The high waves swelled and combed their foam. In eighteen hundred and thirty-eight came the crashing collapse; then gradually a sounder basis was established, and a more healthful growth began. These twenty-five years have tried principle and character; they have thoroughly sifted and separated the wheat and chaff. Should our city continue for centuries, no other like period will have such significance.

It would be easy to find fault with what has been; but on the whole I see most to approve, and to encourage. Our whole life is on a better foundation, than twenty-five years ago,—truer and more reliable; they who begin life to-day have a better opportunity to do well than those who began then; the moral tone is purer, the standard higher, and the means of superior culture are more abundant, and better appreciated. But when I say this, I am thinking more of the coarse, loose, random life of an ambitious young town twenty-five years ago, than of our moral state to-day.

In some respects the tendency of things is not encouraging. Extravagance in living, in building, in dress, and in the whole structure of life, was never greater than six months ago. The moral aspects of this expensiveness are very grave, and alarming. It tempts young people to live beyond their means, betrays multitudes into embarrassments, and, in the end, well nigh compels many to be no better than robbers and thieves. These last twenty-five years have given us many striking lessons: but there is need of more; and well will it be for us, if the times upon which we have fallen shall compel economy in expenditure, and simplicity in our modes of living.

When I came here I entered upon the field of other men's labors. The day of the smallest things of our society was past;—the meetings at the old Court House, at one of which only three gentlemen appeared, then the meetings in attic rooms, up so many narrow stairs, on Main street. What but conscientious convictions could have moved that little band of confessors! The large sects held them to be dangerous; but they were so few, that a shrewd minister said, "let them alone, and they will soon come back to our congregations."

Rev. WILLIAM STEELE BROWN was the first minister. He was an Englishman, a class-mate of JAMES MARTINEAU, and had been first settled in Bridgewater, England. He was a man of ability, and fine scholarship. His wife was a grand-daughter of Dr. PRIESTLEY. They were romantic persons,—came to this country expecting to find a Garden of Eden, or, better still, the New Jerusalem. They were sadly disappointed. In a few months, Mrs. BROWN's delicate health failed, and she went to relatives in the south-west, and died there. Mr. BROWN, with their three little children, went from here to her friends in Kentucky, and thence to Texas, among its first settlers, still seeking the land of promise. In Texas he and his little son died, and the two little girls, left orphans in the wild life of such a country, were adopted by a New Orleans gentleman, and taken to that city.

Mr. BROWN was greatly respected for his power, purity, and uprightness. He studied theology with the distinguished THOMAS BELSHAM. While here he went to hear Mr. BURCHARD, during one of his great revivals. The

preacher undertook to pitch the Unitarians altogether into the pit, and spoke insultingly of "old Tom Belsham," as he chose to call him. Mr. BROWN's high spirit could not bear the scoffing falsehood; he rose to the full height of his commanding person, in the midst of the great congregation, and arrested the preacher, charging him with falsehood; but upon the instant, recovering his tranquility, he turned to the people, begged their forbearance for having trespassed upon the proprieties of the place, told them how hard it was to hear his old friend so maligned, and gave notice that in his own church, he would preach upon this matter. I have seen, in manuscript, the masterly sermon, which he did preach, to a great audience.

The Rev. ALBERT C. PATTERSON was the second minister, and retired in ill health, after about two years.

The day of my installation was dark and stormy. It was Sunday, and Dr. DEWEY, then of New York, preached morning and evening. Our prospects were not brighter than the day. The enthusiasm of a new enterprise was gone. We were but few, and the community at large had no God-speed for us; but the few were determined; they had put their hand to the plough, and they would not look back. Those early founders of our society, many of them, were persons of superior worth, and large influence. Some of them are here with us still, others have removed from us, and some have gone into the spiritual world; but in these twenty-five years, many who were with us in eighteen hundred and thirty-six, men and women, have been conspicuous

actors, filling important spheres and offices, and doing faithful service to humanity.

A pastor's pride, which is something like a parent's, urges me to portray some of those, whose memories are sacred in our hearts. We had but one couple who had passed the meridian of life, and could lay any claim to the honors of age; singularly pure and beneficent in their lives, doing us all good by their wise experience, they gently descended the hill, hopefully looking over the valley to heaven beyond; and like a shock of corn fully ripe, they one after the other were gathered into the garner of their Father—gathered as safely, as if they had been taken from the ocean-side, where their early home had been.

Then there comes before me the Senior Deacon of our infant church,—a sterling man, honest, faithful, persistent; one of the working builders of our city, always earnestly engaged; and his strength and influence were sure to go for what he believed the right. His moral weight was very great; his principles were all pervaded by a religious spirit; he showed what he was, by what he did, rather than by what he said. I never had a firmer friend; and when he passed away, worn out by a painful malady, which he endured with a christian heroism, our society lost one of its strongest pillars. His wife, hardly less distinguished for strength, decision, firmness of character, and christian devotedness, comes up to our minds, crowned now with the “well done, good and faithful servant.”

There came here a venerable man, worthily bearing an honored name, made wise by a various experience

and thoughtful study; for a few years he was with us, and held in high respect. He died at Rochester, and his dust rests on Mount Hope.

Then comes the thought of one who was with us in those early days, always with us, and so generous, chivalric, and knightly in his bearing, that we were not a little proud of his company. Greatly did we all regret the causes, which we could not control, that took him from us, before he passed on into deeper life.

And now I see many true and good, who have passed away; a lady who in spirit was a disciple of Fox and Penn, sustained in her sufferings by the inner light, made bright by her Saviour; a good friend, suddenly snatched away from us by cholera, in the midst of his days and usefulness.

And there is one, who went out from us to the most distinguished position; not dazzled by honors, she bore herself in the eye of the nation, with quiet dignity, and christian humility, anxious most of all, to aid her husband in the discharge of his great office, and to return to their old home, which she loved the best. Their work was faithfully done, but she sank and died, while leaving the scenes of public life. Her obsequies were here in the midst of us, and her memory, dearest to those who knew her best, is affectionately cherished.

And now there comes the image of one who was with us from the first, and most happily constituted to work in a forlorn hope; no discouragement, I believe, ever touched him; and his generosity was large and free; he would have his wife among the foremost workers and givers; and she had the heart to do every

good thing, and with such geniality and grace, that we can never forget the benefactions. They left us, and made a beautiful home in the West, where troops of friends were entertained with a princely hospitality, and, where the beginning of a liberal church was made. But alas! the life of our friend was suddenly quenched amidst fire and flood, and Lake Michigan became his sepulchre.

Judge the tree by its fruits, and our society justifies its establishment. It has had no great outward prosperity; in its struggle up stream, it has breasted a powerful current; it has encountered ignorant prejudice, and wilful misrepresentation, as well as intelligent and honorable dissent; it has been a minority, amidst increasing majorities; and that we have maintained our position, and made progress, is something to encourage us. We have lived honestly; a self-sustaining society always, and for many years doing something for missionary service in the West. We have not corrupted the motives of our people by trying to live and do good by fairs and lotteries; we have not made debts that could not be paid, nor rendered worship so expensive, that none but the rich could afford to participate in it.

We have lived together in harmony. Few religious societies can show twenty-five years' life, with so little disaffection and jarring. We have always had such a basis of true refinement, and christian excellence, men and women so just and true and noble, that pique, and jealousy, and passion, which will come sometimes, could not disturb the general harmony.

But I am borne by the influence of our anniversary

to think how I have done my duty. That we have remained a society, that we have lived together in peace, that we have not disgraced christianity by parochial broils and dishonesty, this is something; but still the question comes, "how have I fulfilled my ministry?" I might bring here the records of pastoral care, the statistics of Sunday School, the number of baptisms, marriages, deaths and funerals, and show you what a living, changing, dying, and yet abiding thing a parish is. In these twenty-five years, childhood has grown to maturity; and they whom I found in active life, have passed the summit, and are going down the hill,—many indeed have gone out of sight.

How many opportunities to do good in twenty-five years! If the results fall short, let me plead how various and difficult are the duties; how in the same day sympathy is required in the most various circumstances. This hour, comes the joyous scene of the bridal; the next, anxious, solemn words at the death-bed; or the affecting service of the burial. After twenty-five years each of your homes, at the sight of it, brings up interesting, thrilling memories. Oh how they come, thronging the brain, sad memories, unless we stand in the light of christian hope!

There was the brilliant bridal feast, and the joyous departure for a pleasure journey. In a few days, the bride was borne in funeral array to be laid in the sepulchre, and all our hopes of the beautiful home that was to be with us, were blasted. There was an only son,—his parents' life was bound up in the lad's life,—and when he was preparing to do well, putting on the glory

of young manhood, his life was quenched, and his poor body was brought home to an early grave. There was an only daughter, standing in her mother's place, with a fine efficiency and grace; her father's joy, and hope; and oh, so suddenly, she was taken away! Trying scenes, seasons of anxiety and anguish; I need not speak of them; they come up out of the years, painfully vivid. I see a venerable mother and daughter lying in their coffins side by side—five children taken from one family in scarcely twice that number of years;—and what numbers of the young, the beautiful and promising;—daughters in their morning loveliness, one, and another! Ah, how many of them! Three adult sons from one family, and two from another—in each case all the sons—and with such clouding of fair prospects, and such failure of high expectation!

If I have been anything to you in such seasons, if I have succeeded in giving the right voice to God's dealings, if I have ever brought you to visions of spiritual life, through your sorrows, or through your joys;—for really friends we have had far more joy than sorrow;—if I have been of any service to your children, in Sunday School, in my own house these many charming Sunday evenings, in your homes, or in the schools;—if in any way of pastoral activity I have made your lives purer, nobler, more truly christian, I would thank God with all my heart.

Oh, Friends, let us study the ideal of this relation of pastor and people. It should be a sacred, quickening relation! It lies in the midst of us, connected with opportunity and privilege, and may be a mutual bless-

ing and joy. But there is danger of slumbering upon its great significance.

May God be with us in the coming years, that my work may be better done, and your spiritual benefit more largely secured!

Quarter Centennial Discourses.

THE PULPIT.

Quarter Centennial Discourses.

THE PULPIT.

"I WILL REMEMBER THE YEARS."—*Psalms*, 77: 10.

THE pulpit of this country, and especially of our Northern and Western States, has greatly changed in these last twenty-five years. It has grown less passionate, and more thoughtful; the machinery for producing religious convulsions has been pushed into dark places for old rubbish, and preaching has been brought nearer to the facts of life; it is more reasonable, more tender and humane; it has far less of dogma from worn-out creeds, and more of the vital spirit of practical religion. Calvinism grows oblivious of its old asceticism, denies that it ever did consign little children to hell, or frown sourly upon all graceful amenities and innocent amusements, and is really trying to smile and be genial. The whole spirit of sectarianism is changing, and the sects are becoming only different families of christendom, all in the one fold. The most influential pulpits, in whatever denomination they be found, are in a large degree unshackled by their creeds, and speak out of love to God and man.

Much has been said about the power of the pulpit waning and passing away. Popular lectures, multiplied

books and libraries, newspapers seeking every neighborhood, and sought by everybody,—all these means of enlightenment, we have been told, were to supersede the pulpit. Facts bring us to a different conclusion. The position of the pulpit, and the nature of its influence, have greatly changed; but we have pulpits in our great cities to-day, that are exerting influences as deep and wide as any pulpits have ever done; and I do not forget the golden-mouthed Crysostom at Constantinople, Ambrose at Milan, Augustin in Africa, Bernard of Clarivauz, a light in the dark ages, called the honied teacher, and his writings streams out of paradise, or John Wesley and Whitefield.

The pulpit cannot pass away. Religion is a mighty concern in the human consciousness, and there must be a human personality addressing that consciousness by love, sympathy, thoughtfulness, to awaken the deep forces of the soul, and bring man to man, and all, with adoring worship, to God. No scientific lecturer can do this; no book, nor all the Astor-Library, can do it. The preacher is wanted. Think of standing in the audience of Whitefield, or Robert Hall, or Chalmers! What is it that so heaves the ocean-soul of the multitude around you? The mere words, if they were printed, might not seem at all remarkable; and yet there is a power there, and directed by that preacher, that reaches all the depths and heights of the soul.

Said one who had been listening to Dr. Channing, in one of his fine efforts, “as we came out of the church strangers grasped hands, and looked into each other’s souls, through tearful eyes, with a silent, solemn

joy, that all could stand in such a fellowship of grace!" No doubt the discourse was admirable, but there was a human personality there behind the sermon, devout, sympathetic, loving, without which the true words would have been cold and abstract.

Effectual preaching is a mysterious thing. I said once to an eloquent friend from the other side of the Atlantic, "What of the late GEORGE HARRIS, Unitarian minister, of Glasgow?" "Well," said he, "in some respects not much can be said of superiority. Not much scholarship, and rather an ordinary mind; his intellect is like a clumsy, rusty lightning rod, awkwardly put in place upon a house; but when Mr. HARRIS stands in the pulpit, his devout feelings in activity, his great human heart on fire with zeal and sympathy, an electric glory invests the rusty lightning rod, and the man is transfigured!"

Paul tells us that God is pleased, through the foolishness of preaching, that the souls of his children should be quickened. This divine purpose is likely to stand as long as men and women live. We are so made that the living preacher has a power not to pass away.

But not all preachers are living ones, and I ask forbearance of judgment while I climb down from my thought of what preaching may be, to what it has been here these twenty-five years.

A preacher's work is not just what it seems. The congregation see him come into the pulpit, easy, collected, and after an hour and a half's various exercises he retires, and many have no idea of what has been done. Could they have been in the spirit of the

preacher during the previous week, and seen him studying the condition of his people, watching for tendencies and perils, beholding this sin working into that soul, and another sin into this, observing his people passionately awake to fleeting interests, and so asleep to the everlasting verities of truth and righteousness; and could they see him, sharply reconnoitering the approaches of vice, anxiously engineering to reach and remedy evils, and encourage good; selecting the topic, deciding upon the treatment, making the discourse just graze here, and hit there; avoiding offensive personalities, and striving all the time to unearth the roots of sin, and wither them to death; could they see him writing his sermon, feeling the presence of his congregation in the writing, almost as much as in the delivery, writing out of his heart, and sometimes half blinded with tears,—then they would know what it is, in writing sermons and preaching them, that so exhausts spirit and body.

To preach away from home is easy; but to prepare, and come and stand among one's own people, with love, conscience, and thought of results, and speak of duties which must be done, wrongs and sins that must be avoided, sorrows and trials that must be met, and feel the vital forces of spirit wasting in the action of sympathy;—Oh, it is a strain upon nature, and hardest to those who work deepest!

My friends, I could bring memories here of anxious thought, prayerful preparation, and earnest effort, at times of special moment, when I have felt the burden of duty on my soul, or when my love and sympathy

for you in your calamities have compelled my utmost exertion. Those memories come up out of the years, pertaining to labor and anxieties, which now lie under my life, all out of sight, as the foundation on which the house stands. Would that the foundations were broader and deeper, and the house, so long in building, were better worth speaking about.

My preaching here, and especially in the earlier years, was somewhat modified by my position. If I was ever a polemic, it was because I must be, not because I chose. This pulpit arose out of protest against the doctrines and inhumanities of Calvinism, and the excesses of fanatical zeal. It was a matter of duty with that little company of men and women who began this church. They had grieved to hear christianity misrepresented, and wild excitement called the work of the Holy Spirit. Some of them had been proscribed, and they all were treated as heretics doomed to perdition; and they came here at much expense, and large sacrifice of social comfort, in hope to enjoy themselves and publish to others the true gospel.

This gospel, for twenty-five years, I have endeavored to preach to you. Its beautiful simplicity makes it easy to give its outlines and main features.

First of all, I have sought to set forth in open light, God, the one, only living, and true God,—that infinite personality, who is with us to-day, as full of grace as at Sinai or Zion, waiting to pour tides of light and love into receptive souls, our Heavenly Father.

I have sought light from nature and revelation, and by each the strict Unity of God has been shown. All

admit that Old Testament and New teaches this. The doctrine of the Trinity cannot stand consistently with the strict Unity. Trinity, if it really means anything, divides, separates, destroys Unity, and confuses our conception of Deity. Against such dangerous error I have striven to make manifest the ONE GOD, the Gracious Father, who by his holy spirit quickens and sanctifies us. I have earnestly proclaimed what I so deeply feel, how dependent we all are upon the quickening of this holy spirit of the Father; an influence as sure to come to the co-operative spirit, as the vital air to the moving lungs.

In the second place, I have preached as I have been taught by His own words in the sacred narratives, and by the preaching of Peter and Paul, Christ,—whom the Father raised up, and sanctified, and sent to save men from sin and misery. I have proclaimed him as the wisdom of God, and the power of God; that in him the word or manifestation of God was made flesh, and that inasmuch as the spirit of God was given to him without measure, so God was said to be in Christ, reconciling the world to himself. I have not preached that Christ is very Deity, of one substance with the Father, and of like attributes, equal in power and glory. Christ disclaims all this. “My Father is greater than I.” “I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.” But I have sought to glorify the Saviour. I believe he is to be honored most truly by being accepted as he declared himself,—not as an equal with

the Father, but as one created, miraculously endowed with the holy spirit, and sent to teach truth and open the way of life. With a grateful reverence, and an interest that has grown deeper and livelier with each year of my ministry, I have tried to open and illustrate the saving revelation in Jesus Christ. He shows the moral image of the invisible God. In him the Father comes near to us. Christ's words and life show his Father's truth and will. Christ is God's messenger and ambassador—he comes on a divine mission. But at the same time he calls himself our brother, and we may be touched by his holy sympathies, and drawn so near as to feel the beating of his human heart.

I have not preached the doctrine of two natures in Christ, because he did not speak of it; the New Testament nowhere speaks of it; it is man's invention, and would confound the testimony of Christ. But I believe that Christ is peculiarly near to Deity, in the Father's bosom, at the same time that he is near to us. He was raised up to be a mediator between God and man, to take the things of God and show them unto us. Behold him,—his face beaming with light and love! He says, "Come unto me; this is the way, I am the way; this is the truth, I am the truth; this is the life, I am the life!" and he would take our hand in his, and lead us to the Father, and to the fellowship of heaven.

In the third place, I have preached concerning the nature, condition, and destiny of man. I have set forth the gospel, that God created man in his own

image, and made him capable of doing his duty. I have not given a shelter for sin, by teaching that through Adam's fall we have all become totally depraved, born under a curse, and morally incapable of being anything but sinners, unless by absolute, partial, election, which would impeach divine justice. I have taught that God is not a hard master, that He does not hold us accountable for the deeds of a remote ancestor, nor bring us into the world incapable of doing the duty required of us.

We can do right; but we are free agents, and we all come short; and by wrong doing, evil has grown strong in the world. This power of sin has been accumulating ever since man was created; and it besieges the child in the cradle, the youth in his sports, maturity in its business; so man has yielded, and taken this plague of sin into his soul; and eighteen hundred years ago, the world so needed a Saviour, that God sent Christ. But for what precisely did Christ come? and how was he to save men? Some say by suffering the penalty of sin—that is death—by dying on the cross, and literally by his blood and sufferings buying off sinful men from the wrathful judgments of God! We hear of divine justice that could not forgive penitent children! We hear of God, in the second person of the Trinity, coming, and suffering, and dying, that God in the first person of the Trinity might exercise the attributes of mercy! I have preached nothing so hard as this.

It is a simple story; any child may read it in the Gospels. The children of God had become sinful; they

had abused their liberty and privileges, turned their light to darkness; they had wandered from God into a far country, and were miserable. Instead of the one God, their Father, they had their idols; instead of immortality and righteous retribution, they had shadowy dreams, and puerile theories, and were sunk in selfishness and sensualism. And God so loved the world that he sent Christ to show men the Father; to bring to light a spiritual immortality, a righteous judgment, and an everlasting growth in liberty, holiness and love. To do all this, Christ lived and taught; and to carry the lesson into the heart of the world, to impress us all with an idea of the horror of sin, to show us that he would do anything to win us from it, he gave himself in suffering and death; and all this, to touch our hearts, impress our moral nature, and so draw us away from sin, and reconcile us to God. I have preached Christ as the moral image of God, as the witness of truth, as the life and power of glorious goodness, as suffering for righteousness' sake, and dying that we might live.

I have striven to hold up immortality all radiant with the light that comes streaming through the riven sepulchre of Jesus, and out of the living, longing soul. We are to live, we must live, and reap what we have sown. Our life here passes on into the life hereafter. What the Bible calls heaven, is the result of goodness; it is a state of the soul. We shall have just as much heaven as we have goodness, and no more. What the Bible calls hell, is the result of wickedness; this, too, is a state of the soul; and hell, with its moral miseries, sharp as fire, will touch us, just so much as we are

wicked. Mere death of the body makes no change, only as beyond it, the retribution will be more searching and thorough.

And now, with all these considerations, so full of hopes and fears; standing by Christ, on the mount, in the garden, and on the cross,—to see how he shows the truth, the way, the life; I have sought to come to you from Sabbath to Sabbath, with something of the Gospel fulness. I have spoken of the soul, of God, of Christ, of immortality. I have said, Behold the ways of life, and death,—see the consequences of good and evil! Oh, friends! have I not spoken plainly, that we must turn back from sinning, be born into spiritual life, and become new creatures? Have I cried, “Peace! Peace!” when there could be no peace, because no acceptance with God?

To those who repent and take the hand of Christ, and go to the Father with loving obedience, Jesus verily brings good tidings; he leads children to their blessed home, to their heavenly rest: but to the unthankful and evil, to mere worldlings, whose hearts have been shut against all this grace of God offering salvation, the message of Jesus must be terrible. And I have preached the terrors of sin;—its dreadful doom is certain; but thanks be to God, the door of hope stands open, and returning prodigals may find their Father. Christ is seeking for them all through the world,—seeking all of us,—for who does not feel that he needs fuller salvation, more of that holy spirit in Jesus, to make us heavenly?

I have tried to bring christianity and life together;

—home, business, amusements, politics, reforms, all to Christ,—to make heaven and earth meet. In this endeavor, I have considered proprieties of time and place. I have never believed that judiciousness was a crime,—nor that prudence was pusillanimity: but I aver that this pulpit has not been muffled; on all the great moral questions, that have been before us for these twenty-five years, its utterances have been distinct, earnest, and consistent; and I am confident that you will bear me witness, that whenever I have spoken upon topics of great moral significance, proper subjects for the pulpit, of course, but in some way mixed with politics, I have stood on christian ground, avoiding party aspects, and clearing myself of all partizan spirit. Indeed, such is my feeling about the office of the pulpit, that I could never come to it to discuss the fleeting issues of our outer life, or to treat any subject in a secular way. I could not make the pulpit a lecturer's stand, or an election-platform. I would come here with awe upon my spirit; and with such a sense of God, and Christ, and the spiritual life, as would make smart discussion of subjects of temporary excitement, an intolerable impertinence.

Let the pulpit preserve its sanctity. Fear of being too staid, and dull, and remote from every day life, has sometimes brought in profane familiarities, miserable witticisms, gossiping stories, busy-body intermeddling with everything beneath the sun, to the sad neglect of the great things that are above the sun. Alas for the pulpit that is silent, or mumbles vaguely; or worse, is trivial, weaving dainty rhetoric,

when God's truth and right are overborne, and trampled down!

The pulpit is set up in this world, a part of its furniture, and for this world, and its immortal actors, it is to minister: but it must never be forgotten that the great power of the pulpit depends upon its closeness to divine things,—divine persons, divine principles, divine aspirations and endeavors. If the pulpit trifles, the power leaves it: the multitude still may throng about it, but it cannot touch the deep soul. While the pulpit speaks to man, it must look up to God, like Moses, coming down, out of the awful glory of Sinai, to the people of Israel, his face all aglow with divine light. I tremble to say it, but this is the true ideal of the pulpit,—every preacher must be a prophet, sent with a message from God; each with the burden of his great office on his soul. Oh, my God, mercifully bear with the dulness of thy prophets, and let thy strength be perfected in their weakness!

Finally, Friends,—for I must cease to speak,—though nothing be fitly spoken, words failing to express what I would say, as in all my life among you, acts have failed to do what I would have accomplished. As I review my ministry, though memories of trying scenes and sorrowful hours rise in my heart, and I feel a deep sense of imperfect life, still I will magnify this office of the christian minister; as it lies in my conception, it is the most momentous employment to which a man can give himself. He is to speak, and live the highest truths; in Christ's stead, an ambassador, he is to bear the glorious Gospel of the blessed God into every

waiting heart,—a work which, if truly done, must be a blessing to humanity, and an acceptable service with the Father.

Dear Friends! you have made me your minister. Twenty-five years we have lived together; in what loving harmony, our anniversary festival shall be the witness. The results of this ministry, whatever they be, are in your souls, and written in the book of everlasting remembrance! How solemnly interesting to turn the leaves of that record! Though the results are less than we had hoped, they shall not prevent just expectations from coming years. We have begun to know and feel the power of christianity, to strengthen principle, to comfort sorrow, to ennoble life, and open the way to blessed immortality. Let us work together, and pray for ourselves, and each other, that we may do more good, and get more grace!

Quarter Centennial Celebration.

Wednesday Evening, October 16th, 1867.

Quarter Centennial Celebration,

AT THE PARSONAGE,

On Wednesday Evening, October 16th, 1861.

EVERY one who was present at the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the installation of the Rev. Dr. HOSMER, as Pastor of the First Unitarian Society in Buffalo, heard it spoken of as a "Silver Wedding." There was a peculiar fitness in the phrase: for the history of Dr. HOSMER's ministry resembles that of a well ordered marriage, more than is perhaps usual in modern days.

The writer was a child when, on the 16th day of October, 1836, the wedding took place. But he was present at the ceremony, and remembers that, although it was performed with due solemnity, it was of that sort usual at a happy marriage, which lasts, at farthest, while the minister is present, and is speedily forgotten in the joy of the occasion. It was remarked at the time, that in age the married couple were well suited to each other. Both were young,—the Pastor having been in the ministry about six years, and the Society having been organized about four. Their friends were liberal, and, like most of the community at that time,

supposed that they were rich. Never did a couple start in life with fairer prospects of temporal prosperity; and their more sanguine friends prognosticated that they would have a family whose size would astonish the staid people of New England, and would fill the western world with its colonies.

As is quite common, however, in such cases, our married pair very soon experienced some disappointments of their hopes. So far as their temporal prosperity was concerned, they met with severe reverses soon after their wedding; and they have never since been quite as rich or fashionable as their friends expected. A few of their calling acquaintances, consequently, deserted them at an early day; and it must be confessed that, although they have had a constantly increasing family, many of whose members are scattered through various States, they have by no means peopled the western world, but on the contrary, have been able, by sundry alterations and additions, to accommodate the household in the old family mansion in which they were married.

But, as in the case of a sensible and christian couple, the chastening of their worldly ambition is apt to lead them to cultivate more sedulously each other's virtues and affections, and to devote themselves more assiduously to the education of their children, so, in the case of the Pastor and People of this Society, it was observed, that, although they did not build them an elegant new house, nor exhibit any other signs of an extravagant prosperity, they nevertheless preserved, during the varying fortunes of twenty-five years, a constantly increasing

affection for each other, and the old house was always the abode of harmony and peace. Not but what there have been little troubles, such as will occasionally occur in the best regulated families; and our good Pastor has been sorely grieved at times, at the short-comings of his flock. But wise parents soon cease to expect that their children will be prodigies; and, if they are reasonably good, while they will strive to make them better, will be thankful that they are no worse. The landlord who for twenty-five years has exhausted the market and his own invention to supply his table, may wonder that, at the expiration of so long a period, his guests are no bigger or fatter than they are, and may despairingly ask for the results of so many toils and so much provisions. And doubtless our respected minister, when he considers the labor he has undergone during twenty-five years, to furnish his people with spiritual food, and reflects how far they fall below his ideal of what, as christians, they should be, sometimes feels that his cares have been almost in vain. He must console himself with the reflection, that during all this time the hungry souls of his parish have been fed; and that, if they have not grown as fast as he could wish, they are still alive, and might have utterly perished, but for the nourishment which they received at his hands.

As is usual in family anniversaries, our celebration was mostly planned by the ladies of the Society, and took the good man of the house somewhat by surprise. Whether the proposition for the festival emanated from one or from many minds at once,

will probably, like the mystery of the Iliad, remain for ever unsolved. The first symptom of the coming event occurred about a week before the 16th of October, and consisted of the appearance at the houses and places of business of the gentlemen of the parish, of one of those self-constituted "Ladies' Committees," which spring, as it were, out of an ambuscade, and demand one's money, without any apparent authority, or giving any security for its application. Committees of this description are apt, in hard times, to be met with a civilly cool reception, and an unusual rigidity of countenance; but on this occasion, as soon as their errand was explained, all faces, hearts, and purse-strings, were at once relaxed. Every one asked, not how small, but how large a share he might have in the contemplated gift; and although the views of the committee expanded as they went on, they soon found that they had more than means sufficient to enable them to present to our minister and his family a testimonial not entirely unworthy of the affection of his people.

To our respected parishioner, Mr. THOMAS STEPHENSON, was confided the duty of procuring from New York City a silver service. The patterns were submitted to various ladies and gentlemen, and their selection met with universal approbation. The articles were not seen by the writer until the evening of the festival, and his unaccustomed pen is quite incompetent to describe them; but the unanimous sentiment of those who saw them, was, that in genuine worth and simple beauty, they were fit emblems of the daily lives of those for whose use they were procured.

The following is a list of the articles composing the service :

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|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Salver, | 5. Tea Pot, |
| 2. Sugar Bowl, | 6. Cream Pitcher, |
| 3. Coffee Urn, | 7. One doz. Forks, |
| 4. Half doz. Spoons, | 8. One pair Salts, |
| 9. One doz. Tea Spoons. | |

Each article was engraved with the surname of the family, and upon the "Salver" was the following inscription: "*The Congregation of the First Unitarian Church to Rev. G. W. Hosmer, D. D., on the 25th Anniversary of his Pastorate. Buffalo, Oct. 16th, 1861.*"

The first notice which our Pastor's family received of the celebration, was the arrival at the Parsonage of numerous boxes, baskets, bundles, and bales, containing a vast profusion of such provisions as, among civilized people, are esteemed most suitable to the agreeable prolongation of human life. These were followed by the arrival of a large force of the youth and beauty of the congregation, who took possession of the house, and prepared it for the reception of company. Ten good sized rooms were opened and decorated for the purpose, and it was soon triumphantly demonstrated that October is not behind her sister months in her adorning wealth. There were a few late, and some green-house flowers; but the decorations consisted chiefly of wreaths of evergreen interspersed with bunches of snow berries, and the red berries of the mountain ash, variegated by the scarlet leaves of the woodbine. To thoughtful minds, there was something most expressive in these memorials of the autumn season,

emblematic as they were of the years of our beloved minister and wife, the spring and summer of whose life had been spent in our service.

In the meantime, various ladies had visited the house of every member of the Society, and invited them to be present at the Parsonage on the evening of the 16th, at seven o'clock. It was a clear, mild, autumn night. The windows were thrown open, and by eight o'clock, the rooms and halls of the Parsonage, and its piazza, decorated with colored lanterns, were crowded with the families of the Parish. There never was a Silver Wedding accompanied with more numerous or more sincere congratulations. Our good Pastor could not behold without emotion, the gray-haired men who first welcomed him to his post of duty, who had been his faithful friends through the vicissitudes of twenty-five years, and who now, with their children, whom he had married, and their grand-children, whom he had baptised, had come to express to him their continued affection and respect. In a single hour was crowded the memory of the joys, the trials, and the sorrows, of twenty-five years; and although the occasion was in many respects a merry one, still there were very few who did not feel more sensibly than they had ever done, the sacred significance of the relation which exists between a pastor and his people, and the solemn issues involved in the life of such a congregation as ours, for so long a period of time.

At eight o'clock, the presentation of the Service, (accompanied by several other gifts, presented by various members of the congregation,) was made on behalf

of the Society, by one of the Pastor's earliest parishioners, and most faithful friends, the Honorable MILLARD FILLMORE, in the following words:

Reverend and Dearly Beloved Pastor :

This being the twenty-fifth anniversary of your ministry among us, your Congregation are here assembled to interchange congratulations, and mark the event with some memento expressive of their sentiments and affection. They have assigned to me the pleasing duty of presenting to you, on their behalf, the beautiful tea set, with the accompanying plate, which stands before me.

We beg you to accept this free and voluntary offering—not on account of its pecuniary value—but as a slight testimony of our appreciation of your long and arduous—and, I may add,—successful labors among us, as the Pastor of the First Unitarian Church in this city.

Since you came among us, this town has more than quadrupled its population. It was then but a city in name, struggling against the adverse circumstances of 1836 and '37, which had paralyzed its industry, depreciated our property, and swept into hopeless bankruptcy many of our most enterprising and respected citizens. Now, our well-paved and well-lighted streets, adorned with palatial residences and garnished with trees, attest the prosperous change of a quarter of a century.

When you settled here, you found the Society for whose welfare you have labored so long and so successfully, very small indeed. Now it is hardly possible to find space to accommodate them on this interesting occasion. They crowd your rooms, they fill your halls, and look in at your windows,—all anxious to catch a glance of their beloved Pastor, and hear his familiar voice.

It cannot be denied that, under Providence, we owe much of this success to your ministration, and especially to your parochial labors. This, however, is no time to enter into a detailed account of what you have done, nor of the beneficial influence which you have exerted; but I must say that, with a meek and unassuming christian deportment, an unspotted reputation, and a disinterested benevolence, you have given your heart and soul most effectually to every benevolent object, every charitable establishment, and every literary enterprize. These good works are held in grateful remembrance, and for them we delight to honor you. But this is not all:

as Pastor and flock we have dwelt together in peace, sympathizing with each other—rejoicing in prosperity, and mourning in adversity. Firm in your own religious opinions, and tolerant of those with whom you differ, you have been able to maintain and propagate your own views, without incurring sectarian hatred or jealousy. For this, let me congratulate you, and those who stand around you. It is one great cause of our success.

You behold here a few of the gray heads and bending forms of those who witnessed your advent; but many, very many, of the stalwart men and accomplished women whom you see around you, received their infant baptism at your hands, and their first lessons in morality and religion from your teaching. It is not possible that this relation should have existed so long without creating on your part a tender pastoral regard for those over whose welfare you have watched with so much solicitude; and I am happy to be able to assure you, that we reciprocate with grateful hearts and filial affection the warm attachment which you feel for us.

And we all unite in a most fervent prayer to the Disposer of all human events, for your continued health, prosperity and happiness; and for the like blessings on her who has so devotedly shared your toils and anxieties, and who cannot but rejoice with us in your success. Pray let this donation descend to your posterity as an enduring testimony of our esteem and affection for you.

It was evident that the presentation was entirely unexpected by Doctor HOSMER; and he was too much affected by the beautiful and impressive address by which it was accompanied, to make any formal reply. He expressed, however, in a voice which betrayed how deeply he was moved, his grateful remembrance of the many evidences of affection which he and his had received from his parishioners, during the past twenty-five years. He said he should not attempt to convince his people, at this late day, that he was not worthy of their good opinion. If it was an illusion, it was one that did them good, for it made them affectionate and generous; and therefore all he would say, was,

that he would do his best to deserve the kind things that had been said of him. He was unable to say more, except to express his assurances of continued affection for them all, and his heartfelt thanks for this beautiful testimonial of the love of his people.

Mr. NOAH P. SPRAGUE was then called upon, and addressed the company substantially as follows:

Dear Friends:

It has been thought advisable by those having in charge the arrangement of affairs for this evening, that some account should be given on this occasion, of the origin and early history of this Religious Society. That duty has been assigned to me.

Unfortunately, at a large fire in this city, a few years since, the Parish records, then in the office of the Secretary of the Parish, were burned. I shall not, therefore, be able to be as accurate as is desirable, as to some of the facts and dates of which I shall speak.

During the early part of the year 1831, and for some years preceding, there was at times much religious excitement in the then village of Buffalo. Protracted meetings and revivals of religion, carried on with great zeal and enthusiasm, were not unusual. They were the subject of much criticism by the public, and while discussions, on the subject of revivals, were going on, the few Unitarians here became acquainted with each other, and began to express their great desire to hear preaching more congenial to their feelings, and more consistent with their views of christianity.

Some time in the summer of 1831, a gentleman observed on the books of the Eagle Tavern, the name of the Rev. JOHN PIERPONT, of Boston. On inquiry it was found that he had left with a party for Niagara Falls. A few gentlemen having accidentally met, the circumstance was mentioned, and at their solicitation I went to Niagara Falls, where I found Mr. PIERPONT, and urged him to visit Buffalo and preach. Mr. PIERPONT expressed much gratification at my calling upon him, and much regret that he could not comply with our request; but he had ladies under his care, and the party were to leave that afternoon for Montreal, and he could not break up their arrangements. We had a lengthy conversation in relation

to the state of religion in Buffalo, its wants, and its prospects; and finally Mr. PIERPONT said, that if on reflection the Buffalo people thought it best to attempt to introduce Unitarian preaching among them, he would endeavor to procure a competent minister for that purpose. A correspondence was then opened with him, which resulted in his obtaining the services of Rev. Mr. SULLIVAN, of Keene, N. H., who visited us in the month of November, 1831, and preached three Sundays in the Court House, the use of which was granted to us by the Sheriff of the County.

These were the first sermons ever preached in Buffalo by a Unitarian minister, with the exception of one by the Rev. Mr. PIERCE, of Trenton, N. Y., some years before, at the request of the Universalist minister then here, which I attended.

Quite a large congregation attended on the first Sunday's services of Mr. SULLIVAN. Much satisfaction was expressed by numerous individuals, so much so, that a few of us determined to organize a society, and on the next Sunday notice was given of our intention. The second and third Sundays of Mr. SULLIVAN's services were not as well attended as the first, but there was an increased determination in the minds of the friends of the enterprise, to push it ahead. It became necessary to have one religious meeting after Mr. SULLIVAN left, in order that our notices, for the organization of the society, might be legal. Notice was given of the time and place of such meeting by Mr. SULLIVAN, on the last Sunday of his stay. When the evening came, it proved to be very stormy, and but three persons—Mr. JOHN W. BEALS, Mr. SAMUEL N. CALLENDER, and myself—appeared. We had, however, religious services. One of Dr. Channing's sermons was read by Mr. BEALS. Agreeable to notice, on the evening of the 2d day of December, 1831, those persons desirous of organizing a Unitarian Society met at the Court House for that purpose. The audience consisted of Messrs. JOHN W. BEALS, IRA A. BLOSSOM, JAMES MCKAY, ELIJAH D. EFNER, SAMUEL N. CALLENDER, and myself.

The aspect of affairs was certainly not very encouraging, but nothing daunted, they resolved to organize a society, and that evening elected the whole number Trustees of "The First Unitarian Society of the Village of Buffalo," six being the number required by law to make the Board. The expense of the movement thus far was about \$125, and it was deemed by the Trustees not advisable to attempt anything further that winter. A correspondence, however, was opened with our Cambridge friends, and the

next summer the Trustees proposed to them that they would raise \$600 per annum for the support of a suitable minister, which it was thought would be sufficient for the support of a young man. During the summer of 1832 we had preaching two or three Sundays, by ministers who happened this way. The Rev. Mr. WHITAKER was one of them.

In the fall of 1832 the Cambridge people informed us that the services of the Rev. WILLIAM STEILE BROWN, an English clergyman of learning and ability, could be obtained at a salary of \$1,000 per annum; and that from a fund originally raised for missionary purposes in India, the sum of \$333 33 per annum, for three years, would be advanced to us, and in the end probably given us, or never be called for. (One-half of this sum was afterwards repaid.) The Trustees concluded to accede to the proposition. Mr. BROWN was sent for, and they commenced making the necessary arrangements. They had considerable difficulty in obtaining a place of worship. It had been confidently expected that the Court House could have been obtained, but on making application it was found that another new society were contemplating obtaining it; after considerable effort the Trustees were defeated in the attempt. They then obtained the use of a Hall in the third story of a building on the corner of Main and Seneca streets, occupied by the Masonic Fraternity, and by the Lyceum Society.

Mr. BROWN arrived here on a stormy Friday evening in October, 1832. A fire occurred in the building engaged the same night, and burned it to the ground. The Trustees then obtained a room for the Sunday following in the second story of a school house then situated on the corner of Pearl and Mohawk streets, and used for public worship by the Universalist Society, where our first Sunday's services were conducted. The day was rainy and cold, the room smoky and uncomfortable, and the audience slim. It was altogether a very discouraging beginning.

The Trustees then obtained from Mr. RUSHMORE POOLE, a room in the fourth story of the building now occupied by Mr. THOMAS STEPHENSON, on Main street, between Swan and Seneca streets. To get access to it, we had to pass through a long passage from the street, and ascend three pairs of dark, crooked stairs; and as cold weather came on, it was found impossible to keep the room comfortably warm. Yet at times we had fine audiences in this room, and Mr. BROWN's able sermons attracted much attention.

A room was then obtained and fitted up in the third story of Ellicott Square, at an expense of several hundred dollars, the Lyceum Society having agreed to share equally in the expense, an agreement which they never to the extent of one dollar fulfilled, although they used the room for several months, using the fuel and lights of our Society without remuneration.

The aspect of affairs during the spring and summer of 1833 were not very encouraging. Several persons who had been relied upon, as among those who would join our Society, had for various reasons declined doing so; the congregation was small, and there was little hope of its increasing as we were then situated. It was then resolved, after much deliberation and discussion, to make the attempt to build a house of worship. It was found that the lot of land where our church now stands could be obtained, and sufficient means in various ways raised, to justify the Trustees in making the attempt; it was made, and successfully carried through, but not without great effort, many disappointments and embarrassments, and leaving us in debt several thousand dollars.

The Trustees had hoped to obtain the gift of a lot of ground from the Holland Land Company, and would probably have obtained it had it not been for the interference of another rival society; this was quite a disappointment to us. At the time we circulated our subscription paper for the building of the church, we found several persons whom we had hoped would subscribe or buy pews in our church, had been induced to take pews in another church which was building at the same time, and who, had they known of our intention of building sooner, would, they said, gladly have joined us. These, and other incidents which I have not time to mention, were among the discouraging things the Society had to meet and overcome.

The corner stone of the church was laid with appropriate ceremonies, in the summer of 1833, and the church completed and dedicated late in the fall of the same year, the Rev. Mr. PIERPONT preaching the sermon.

A sale of the pews took place immediately, when only fourteen were sold, to twelve persons; and we found that we had but sixteen families who had connected themselves permanently with the Society, There were nearly as many young men who did so.

Mr. Brown remained with us until the spring of 1834. He was an able, learned man, and preached very acceptably; but he had some eccen-

tricties, which prejudiced many against him; the climate did not agree with some of his family, and the salary which we paid him was inadequate to his support, and he accordingly sent in his resignation. The Society, however, had increased under his ministrations, and immediately made efforts to obtain another minister, and soon succeeded in obtaining the services of Rev. ALBERT C. PATTERSON, who was ordained in the spring of 1834, the Rev. Mr. GANNETT preaching the sermon.

Mr. PATTERSON entered upon his duties with great zeal, and new life was infused into the congregation through his means. A Sunday School was for the first time attempted, when only eight scholars were to be found in the Parish of suitable age to attend. Yet with this small number, and a few poor children who were induced to attend, the school began and was regularly conducted thereafter without intermission. Baptism had been performed by Mr. BROWN, but the Communion of the Lord's Supper had never been celebrated until after Mr. PATTERSON's ordination. Mr. JOHN W. BEALS and myself were chosen Deacons, and fourteen persons attended the first Communion.

The Ladies' Benevolent Association was also organized during Mr. PATTERSON's ministration, which has always been a most important auxiliary to the Society.

Mr. PATTERSON preached for the Society until the spring of 1836, when ill health led him to send in his resignation, which was accepted. He continued to preach for the Society, however, until the services of Rev. Mr. HOSMER were obtained. Mr. PATTERSON's preaching and his ministrations were quite acceptable, and the Society increased considerably while he was with us; but I think he was disappointed and discouraged. He had not made, I think, that impression upon the public generally that he had expected, and the progress of the Society was so slow, and the labor so severe, that he finally gave up.

The organ now in the church was put into it in the year 1836, at an expense of about \$2,000.

One most important event, bearing on the pecuniary prosperity of the church, occurred during the early part of the year 1836, which I cannot forbear mentioning. It was the payment of the debt of \$6,000 owing by the Society. In that year Mr. JOHN B. MACY, Mr. SAMUEL H. MACY, and Mr. JAMES MCKAY, proposed to sell to any persons who would purchase, a large tract of land in this city, for twenty-eight thousand dollars,

—six thousand dollars to be paid down, and a bond and mortgage to be given for the balance. The six thousand dollars they proposed to give to the Society, for the payment of its debt. Mr. JOHN W. BEALS, Mr. FRANCIS H. MACY, and myself, made the purchase on the terms proposed, and the Society's debt was paid.

Mr. HOSMER settled in October, 1836. We had considerable difficulty in prevailing upon him to come to Buffalo, but finally succeeded. I do not propose, however, to speak of him or of his ministrations, and shall therefore close my narrative here.

I will remark, however, that probably no society of our faith ever commenced with so few members, or ever met and overcome greater difficulties and embarrassments, than did this Society at its first organization, and during the first five years of its existence. But it had the aid of a few resolute and determined men, whose interest in its welfare never flagged; and it had also the encouragement and efforts of a little band of women who, for intelligence, efficiency, unaffected piety, benevolence, and every christian grace that adorns and renders woman lovely, were never surpassed.

Amid many prayers and tears was the small seed planted and nurtured, but it germinated and grew into a stately tree, and the blessings of God attended it.

He was followed by Mr. OLIVER G. STEELE, as follows:

I have been desired to say a few words on this occasion, in the joy and interest of which I so heartily participate.

It was my privilege to be one of the original members of the Society—the youngest I think at the time, but now among the oldest—and I am happy to give some expression to the sentiments of those who have so long sat under the ministry of the present pastor.

The twenty-five years which have passed, have witnessed great changes in the congregation, though it has at all times retained, in a remarkable degree, its original characteristics. The principles upon which the Society was organized, and the spirit which animated its management, have continued substantially the same. There has always been a central controlling force, amidst the various elements, which, while it has promoted activity, has preserved unity and peace.

The frequent reverses and contingencies arising in the progress of a large

commercial city, have affected our society much less than would be expected, and few societies have been able for so long a period to maintain their position with such consistent and uniform success. Personal friendships and family relations, which began with its inception, have continued with little intermission to the present moment, and are still fresh and vigorous. While the society has not increased in numbers, as might perhaps have been desired, its members have been bound together by the ties of religious and social sympathy to a degree which has rarely been maintained for so long a period. Its numbers have always been able to provide fully for the services of the church, and the expenses of its management, without heavy individual burdens, or extraneous assistance. Every requirement of the society, together with the various benevolent associations connected with it, have been cheerfully met by the voluntary action of its own members.

I allude to these circumstances, not in a spirit of vain glory, but simply to show the spirit and unity which has always pervaded the congregation. While all have performed every duty which came within their sphere and ability, none have done more than ought reasonably to be expected. So fortunate and harmonious a state of things could scarcely have been attained, had we not been blessed with a pastor who, in the pulpit and in pastoral work, could give tone and character to the society. This is no time for extravagant eulogy, or the exhibition of mutual admiration between pastor and people; but it is just that on this occasion, which completes a quarter of a century of pastoral duty, we should express and testify in the most emphatic manner, our abiding love and affection for the pastor, who has so long, and so faithfully fulfilled every duty devolving upon him.

To many of us, who have been visited with sharp domestic grief, or have been involved in the reverses incident to all worldly business, the sincere and heartfelt sympathy of our beloved pastor has always been cheerfully given. No one who has thus suffered has failed to receive every consolation and support which came within the sphere of a faithful christian minister.

Having had the experience of twenty-five years before us, how can we so truly manifest our abiding sense of gratitude, as by continuing in the same course of mutual duty and confidence. The duties of minister and congregation are mutual and continual. They admit of no interregnum. The spirit and the understanding must constantly and consistently

act together, to create and maintain that mutual confidence and earnest christian sympathy, without which no religious organization can exist.

It is not possible in a society like our own, where the utmost freedom of conscience, and the right of private judgment are so fully recognized, that the sentiments of pastor and people upon subjects which agitate the public mind, will always be identical. Yet, while we claim and exercise this common right, let us not deny it to the pastor. If, in the conscientious discharge of his duty, he should rebuke what he deems to be public or private sins, let us receive it in the spirit in which it is given, and concede to the pastor the same freedom of conscience and expression which we claim for ourselves.

The mission of the pastor is to create in his people the highest possible appreciation of christian faith and duty. While our short-comings are so manifest in responding to his appeals, we should at least exhibit our sympathy with his earnest efforts.

While human nature is fallible, even in the christian minister, it is certainly not less so in the people, and more uncontrollable. Let us, therefore, in all the intercourse between pastor and people, exhibit the charity so well expressed by the poet:

"Be to our faults a little blind,
And to our virtues very kind."

With this spirit our church and society will continue to maintain that mutual confidence and christian sympathy which has so long bound us together.

At the close of Mr. STEELE's remarks, Mr. WILLIAM FISKE handed to Doctor HOSMER a rare and fine edition of Bunyan's Works, in two quarto volumes, elegantly illustrated and bound, accompanied by a characteristic note from LORENZO K. HADDOCK, Esq., the donor.

Dr. HOSMER evinced much feeling at the reception of this gift, coming as it did from a gentlemen belonging to another Christian Society.

Mr. GEORGE HERBERT HOSMER then claimed the right to be heard as the "child of the Parish;" and set forth

his argument in the following speech, which was received with very great applause, as it was an utter surprise :

Friends :

I hope, inasmuch as the elder son is absent, that it will not be deemed inappropriate for me to say a few words to you on this occasion.

As a son of the Pastor, I am properly a child of the Parish ; indeed, I may say the child of the Parish, although, if James the elder were present, he might dispute my title. But why should he ?

He by birth is a New Englander, and after having spent the most uninteresting years of his life with you, at the age of seventeen, began his studies in that favored land, and has now finally settled there. Certainly he has no claim to the honor. And in case the second son should put in his plea, I should say that he, too, first saw the light on the banks of the Connecticut, and now, for ten years or more, he has been away, and has fairly made himself a denizen of another city. What right has he to the honor ? Now I claim the right, not only by birth, but by adoption, and being the eldest of the trio at home, I have the claim of age in addition. Henceforth, then, I claim the honor of being *the* Child of the Parish, and shall hold it with jealous care, till, if in future years I find it necessary to take my departure elsewhere, my mantle shall fall, (as did Elijah's of old upon Elisha,) upon the younger member of the family ; that is, if he is able to hold it against the strong protest of his sister, who really ranks above him.

Friends, we are drawn together to-night to celebrate the memories of twenty-five years. The period is crowded with matters of interest for old and young, but it is for the latter especially that I would speak a word. My memory carries me back to our residence on Mohawk street, where, for so many years, were received your many kind tokens of friendship. I well remember New Years Day, the day of all others to me, when, posted at the front door, I thought it my peculiar privilege to welcome you a "Happy New Year," not forgetting the little present frequently accompanying it. Great was my childish regret, when told that I was too forward, that the sphere of little folks was to be seen, not heard ; so I was left, after falling from my lofty position, to take a more appropriate place by my mother's side.

Among other pleasant memories, were the Parish Parties, on which

occasions the house was thrown open to all. The preparation attending these gatherings, and a thousand and one things, in which a little fellow enjoyed taking part, I shall never forget. But my pleasantest reminiscences are connected with the Sunday School, with its pic-nics and festivals—what glorious times we used to have at them! I remember particularly the night on which the Silver Medal was presented to our then indefatigable Superintendent, Mr. O. G. STEELE, (would that he were with us now, in the same position.) I remember how we met in the Church before going down to the Sunday School room, and had the Medal shown to us, that we might not be too much surprised. I remember how the worthy Superintendent was so utterly astounded, that he had no words to express his feelings; and then our joyful time afterwards. Also I re-call the pic-nics in the grove near Sixth street. Going out on the horse cars, then used on that old road, we spent the time in song and frolic, till darkness intervening, broke up our pleasure.

Many were those happy occasions, made all the more pleasant by our neighbor, Mr. THOMAS, who has ever taken a great interest in these gatherings; where there is mirth, there will be song, and at such times our friend was indispensable. Another occasion, which will ever be remembered with the liveliest emotions, was the Conference Meeting. Though I was not a very small “chick” to be sure, still it was all the better to be *aged* then, for had I not been, I should have been excluded, for *tender years*, from the collation. Allow me to say here, to the Elders on this occasion, that at another such gathering, the young, as well as the old, must be admitted; for the indignation of the under-fifteen company, for not being allowed to be present, has not yet died out, and I should be afraid to answer for the consequences in case of a second refusal.

Another memory, although sad for the moment, broke out as the sun from the cloud, bright and cheering. The news that the Church had burned, came upon us that spring morning like a death knell; and well it might, for what associations cluster round a church. There, week by week, we had met to join in our prayers to Almighty God. There, we had seen the bridal ceremony, and the solemn burial service. There, we had been with friends, who have gone before us to another world. In fact, the very sight of the church brings forth holy memories; and as we went and gazed upon its ruins, a feeling akin to having one's own home in ashes came over us. But suddenly out of the charred timbers rose a

temple more beautiful than before, and it was felt, that what at first had seemed a calamity, was in fact a blessing.

Nine years ago, the ladies of this Society, with a loving care for their minister, purchased this house for a Parsonage, and here provided a suitable place, where Pastor and People might meet in those social relations which tend to give more life, and form such a binding influence in religious societies. Here the Pastor and his family have had a permanent home. Here they have spent many, many, happy hours.

If a stranger should look in upon us to-night, he would think something unusual was going on. What means this multitude of people, these many happy faces, these beautiful decorations, and these splendid presents? Certainly this is a joyous festival, an outward expression of a generous people towards their Pastor. A great surprise it is to him, for although he might have known that something was going on, he had little thought of this outburst of feeling.

From every leaf there seems to come a smile of gladness; and every thing bears an expression of overflowing charity. Friends! Would that the whole family, every one of us, were here to appreciate your kindness: but be assured, that if words *can* express our feelings, the absent member shall know how much he has lost by not being here. We regret the imperative causes that have detained him.


The ceremonies of the presentation here terminated. The remainder of the evening was devoted to social conversation, and to the interchange of the congratulations natural to the occasion, until about ten o'clock, when the elder members of the Society were invited to the supper room, where they found the table loaded with good things, conspicuous among which, at each end, was one of those huge wedding cakes, which from time immemorial have been consecrated to matrimony. From the chandelier, over the centre of the table, were suspended bunches of Hamburgh and Muscat grapes, looking down upon the more common Catawbas and Isabellas, which were heaped in profusion below. It

was supposed that there were sufficient provisions on the table for a congregation of school boys, but it was announced by a young gentleman of about twelve years of age, that various closets which he had explored were no less full than the table, and that therefore the boys need not be alarmed at the precedence given to the Elders of the Church. However, the children finally had their turn, and demonstrated their appreciation of the entertainment in that hearty way common to young people.

About eleven o'clock the company began to retire, leaving with their beloved minister and his family, their blessings and best wishes. A little before twelve, and while several of the guests were still lingering, the strains of "Home, Sweet Home," were sung by a serenading party, composed of Messrs. BLODGETT, VINING, BAKER, TOBIAS and CLEVELAND, thus furnishing as beautiful a conclusion as could well be devised, to the festivities of the evening. About one the guests had retired, and our Silver Wedding was over; a wedding not so bright, perhaps, with extravagant hopes, as that of twenty-five years ago, but infinitely richer in its sense of duty done, of work accomplished, and of progress made, in its pleasant and affecting memories, and in its rational expectations of future success and happiness.

The Priest of Now.

A POEM.

 The Committee are permitted to place here, at the close of our Memorial, a short Poem, which was written by the Rev. JAMES K. HOSMER, of Deerfield, Mass., and sent to his father, soon after the Festival ; the writer having been prevented from being present by imperative circumstances in his parish.

The Priest of Now.

"THE TRUE LIGHT WHICH LIGHTETH EVERY MAN THAT COMETH INTO THE
WORLD."—*John*, 1: 9.

EXODUS XXVIII.

I.

In Israel's fane, the priest of old
In glowing mitre sought the shrine,
His ephod's broad, empurpled fold,
With cunning work embroidered fine—
In azure vest
Of byssus dressed,
Besprent with golden clasp and gem--
And censer swung
And fumed,—and rung
The bells of gold that fringed his hem.

II.

But chief, above his heart was bound
The jewelled breast-plate, folded square;
And oft (for so they thought) 'twas found,
The "ELOHIM" descended there.
For beryl bright,
And chrysolite,
And sardius, flushed like dawn, oft poured
With fiery ray!
And Aaron aye
"Bore judgment" thus before the Lord.

III.

Thee, Priest of now, no hand hath graced
With Levite's gorget, God controlled;
Yet on thy heart is "judgment" placed
Not less than on the priest of old.
From emerald's lip,
And sapphire's deep,
No tinted gush of God-sent might!
In all ensouled,
For aye hath rolled
Such holy force and full of light!

IV.

In all! The bigot's hateful hedge,
Where God would have unfenced meads,
Hath parcelled off. With thorough edge
We cut the pale that parts the creeds.
Each Pagan scheme,
Sweet Truth!—we deem
Some lisp of thee—not Folly's lie;
A plot o'erlaid
Too thick with shade,
Whose healthful crop came scant thereby.

V.

Wild Sibyls, who 'mid grotto dim,
In panting rhapsody do speak—
Ye Cimbric bards, who pour the hymn
Before your lichened altars bleak,
And Guebre saint,
Whose soul doth faint,
While Sirius bands the troop of stars—
And Priest who turns
From brimming urns
Libation pure to Jove and Mars—

VI.

God's crude and green-hewn torches ye!
That foul the flame with drift of smoke —
That show his ray but glimmeringly —
Yet nought avails the light to choke.
The frenzied dance —
The mystic chants —
The saga shouted through the wood
By Odin's child —
All worship wild!
All broken homage of the Good!

VII.

O Stream! for whose so plenteous tide,
Old Aaron's gems poor conduits are —
Most sweet! indeed, thy bounty wide,
Sent full through zones and cycles far,
Doth Druid bless,
And Pythoness,
And Prophet hoar, and all—but thou,
The mellower gush —
And holier rush,
Hast in thy heart, O Priest of Now!



